THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

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The RING MARCH 2016

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Gennady Golovkin has become a major player in boxing.

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A special Best I Faced reveals Muhammad Ali's toughest opponents.

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THE VALUE OF A KNOCKOUT

I thought of the late, great Emanuel Steward during the last two or three rounds of the Canelo Alvarez-Miguel Cotto fight on Nov. 21 in Las Vegas.

Steward would've been screaming in Alvarez's ear between rounds, "Go for it! Go for the knockout! Take this guy out!" even though Canelo had the fight well in hand by that point. Wladimir Klitschko, Steward's last elite fighter, would attest to that.

See, Steward understood as well as anyone the marketing value of the knockout or at least a genuine attempt to get one.

The fans, particularly those who supported the redhead and understood what was at stake, appreciated Alvarez's one-sided decision victory. They would've appreciated a knockout a great deal more. It would've touched them more deeply, left them more gratified.

One way in which Canelo Alvarez failed: No KO.

That's how you build an attraction, Steward would've told you. The fans appreciate a boxer with the skill to win a decision; they love the guy who finishes the job inside the distance.

Consider two other fights on the Alvarez-Cotto card: Guillermo Rigondeaux vs. Drian Francisco and Francisco Vargas vs. Takashi Miura.

Any reasonably knowledgeable fan knows that Rigondeaux is a sublime boxer, one who could neutralize almost any opponent you could place in front of him. That's what he did to Francisco. How did the fans react? They booed throughout much of a boring fight.

In the next fight, Vargas hurt Miura in the first round, went down himself in Round 4, seemed to be all but finished by mid-fight and then, in Round 9, found the strength to put Miura down and followed with a vicious barrage of punches that ended the fight.

The crowd went nuts. The fans might appreciate Rigondeaux's skill; they loved what Vargas gave them. They crave action and drama and nothing is more dramatic than a spectacular knockout like that.

Snobby fans who like to call themselves "purists" often scoff at such a notion. They contend that the type of boxing clinic fighters like Rigondeaux can give should be enough to satisfy true fans. That's their opinion. Most fans don't see it that way.

This isn't one of the major team sports, in which you're judged solely on your ability. To reach a typical boxing fan, a fighter must have either an entertaining style or an entertaining personality. Without either, he is likely to languish in relative anonymity with minimal paydays.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. didn't have an exciting style but he got away with it because of his polarizing personality, which pushed people's buttons whether you loved him or hated him.

The skill level of fighters like Arturo Gatti pale next to those of the Rigondeauxs and Mayweathers. And the fans couldn't care less. He was a capable boxer – one must be at least that to be taken seriously – who gave his heart and soul, which earned him the affection of most fans.

Steward would've pushed Alvarez to be a little bit more like Gatti, to take a few more risks to raise the level of excitement. To do so can pay off in a big way.

The RING

VOLUME 95, NO. 2 | MARCH 2016

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THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 95, NO. 2 (March 2016), is published nine times per year (no issues in June, October and February) by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£4.95 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. And possession $49.00 for nine issues; Canada and Mexico add $7 for nine issues per year and all remaining countries add $15.00 for nine issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2015 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A

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The fans wished they could escape during a boring fight between Drian Francisco (left) and Guillermo Rigondeaux on Nov. 21.

Takashi Miura barely knew what hit him after he was hurt badly and ultimately stopped by Francisco Vargas in a sensational fight.

AFP PHOTO / JOHN GURZINSKI

COME OUT WRITING

ALVAREZ VS. COTTO

GOOD DECISION

The Canelo Alvarez-Miguel Cotto fight was closer than the scorecards indicated but Canelo was the correct winner. And he won in a manner that many didn't expect, with elusive defense bending from the waist. Cotto fought very well too, in a disciplined manner. Improvement under trainer Freddie Roach is real. Cotto can still beat any other 154-pounder or at least be competitive. He should not stay at middleweight, though. Too small.

Hoon Kim
Singapore

BAD DECISION

I supported neither Miguel Cotto or Canelo Alvarez. I just love boxing and thought it would be a good fight. My prediction was that Alvarez would win, as his power shots would prove too much for Cotto. I lost the BoxNation feed at the end of Round 11. No problem, as I was with the commentators all the way: Cotto was ahead on points, basically giving Alvarez a boxing lesson. Alvarez missed with most of his punches, was leaden-footed and put no combinations together. No surprises when I wake up on Sunday: ALVAREZ has been given a unanimous decision. Well, it was another boxing robbery, exactly why so many solid followers do not want to watch this sport anymore. And those British boys know their boxing inside out, by the way.

Richard Stent
Cumming, Ga.

CATCHWEIGHT INSANITY

I have to say that I am getting pretty tired of this catchweight BS. Just because it has been going on for quite some time in the sport does not mean it should continue. Guillermo Rigondeaux has been saying that Vasyl Lomachenko needs to come down from 126 to meet him at 124. ... What is two pounds really going to do? Same thing with Canelo and GGG. If Canelo insists on GGG coming down to 155 to make the fight, then we could be missing out on one of the biggest fights of the year. I understand that fighters want to get every advantage but if trying to do so prevents the fight from happening altogether, then they lose by not getting a chance to prove they're better. And that's even worse for their legacy than having fought and lost.

Jamie Rebner
Montreal, Canada

HOLLY HOLM VS. RONDA ROUSEY

NOT PLEASED

As a subscriber to THE RING Magazine for over 50 years, this is the first time that I have written to you. Ronda Rousey on the front cover is a disgrace! This is a boxing magazine NOT a UFC magazine. UFC is barbaric, allowing a fighter that has been knocked down to be continually hit by their opponent, as demonstrated in the latest Rousey fight. Where is the sport in that? I guess justice was done by the fact that this woman was knocked out here in Melbourne. Good riddance!

Ken Redwood
Melbourne, Australia

THE RING CURSE

I'm not superstitious but I think putting Ronda Rousey on the cover of THE RING and touting her boxing skills was the kiss of death for her!

Eric Brandt
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

EMBRACE IT

Instead of crying, boxing fans should embrace Ronda Rousey on the cover of THE RING. ... It's a substantive step at ending the ridiculous cold war between the two sports. Having her on the cover ensures an entirely new subset of fans will pick up a copy of the magazine.

Brad Morris
Astoria, N.Y.

THE IRONY

It is ironic that your cover girl for January 2016, who had an eight-page tome on her within the covers of THE RING, was soundly beaten by a one-paragraph, Page 90 former boxer. Out of all the female boxers past and present that you could have put on the cover, you chose to put an MMA fighter. As The Bible of Boxing, I would think that if you want to see the doors open for female boxers, you should have had one on your cover prior to Ms. Rousey.

Walter Zabicki
Holly Ridge, N.C.

CORRECTIONS

As a result of an editing error, THE RING indicated in a story about Ronda Rousey that she was the first woman to appear on the magazine cover. She was not. Cathy "Cat" Davis appeared on the August 1978 cover. In "Outside the Ropes" Ann Hirsch's monument to Stanley Ketchel was described as "modestly life-sized"; in actuality, the sculpture is 7 feet tall and reaches 10 feet on its base. Also, in our annual RING 100, we inadvertently used a photo of Daiki Kameda in Koki Kameda's capsule. THE RING regrets the errors.

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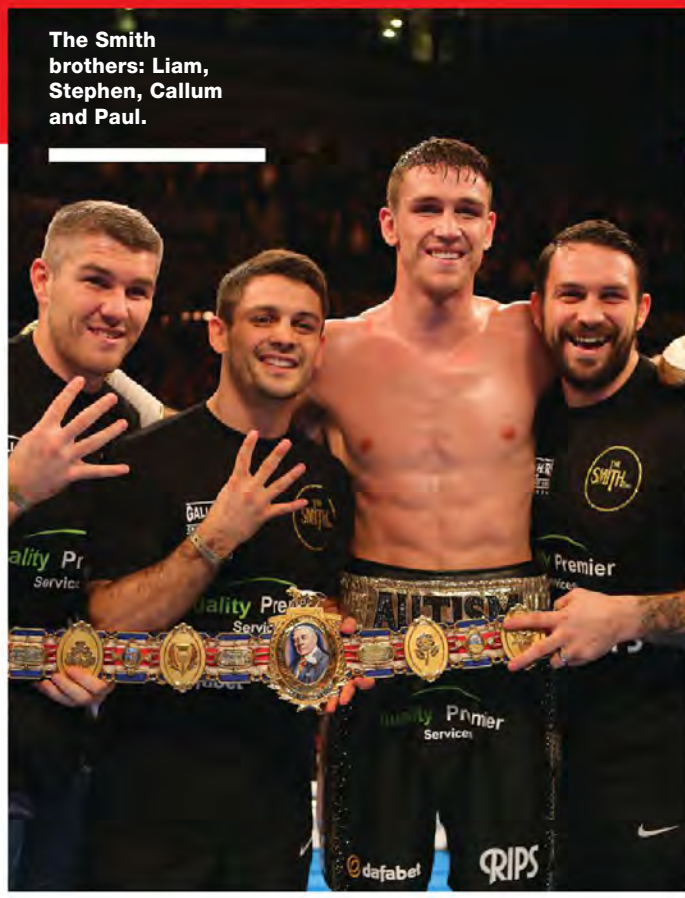
ADVANCED DEGREES

The late Alexis Arguello (inset) was a mentor for countryman Roman Gonzalez.

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month: Roman Gonzalez – the No. 1 fighter in the world, pound for pound – describes his late, great countryman Alexis Arguello as his mentor and inspiration. Gregg Morgan, a regular Advanced Degrees contributor, was able to link them in eight steps even though Arguello fought at a higher weight.

ROMAN GONZALEZ, fought
VALENTIN LEON, who fought
HUGO FIDEL CAZARES, who fought
CARL FRAMPTON, who fought
STEVE MOLITOR, who fought
STEVE TRUMBLE, who fought
JUAN JOSE ARIAS, who fought
JORGE PALOMARES, who fought
ALEXIS ARGUELLO

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES/INSET: ALLSPORT /ALLSPORT; ARGUELLO: THE RING MAGZINE



The Smith brothers: Liam, Stephen, Callum and Paul.

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: In honor of the recent success of the boxing Smith brothers, here are 10 sets of siblings currently fighting in the pro ranks.

- **ALVAREZ –** Canelo, Ramon and Ricardo
- **CHARLO –** Jermall and Jermell
- **CHAVEZ –** Julio Jr. and Omar
- **DOUGLAS –** Antoine and Tyrieshia Douglas
- **GARCIA HIRALES –** Raul and Ramon
- **INOUE –** Naoya and Takuma
- **MATTHYSSE –** Lucas and Soledad
- **PAEZ –** Jorge Jr. and Azriel
- **PETERSON –** Lamont and Anthony
- « **SMITH –** Callum, Liam, Paul and Stephen

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 **DONNIE NIETES** RING JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION ★
2 **ILUNGA MAKABU** CRUISERWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ 3 **LUCIAN BUTE** SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD:	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	"I like Christian songs, Chris Tomlin and Don Moen."	"I had five cars, I gave two to my family. I have a van, a Mitsubishi Eclipse and a Toyota Innova. My dream car is a big car, maybe a Hummer."	"Fruits and vegetables. **Lechon (roasted pig)**."	"I don't have a tattoo."	"I love to play basketball and to watch car racing. My favorite race car driver is the American actor Patrick Dempsey."	"I love to watch scary movies and of course the 'Fast and Furious' series."	"I play games on my phone: car racing, boxing."
2.	"I like house music."	"I'm not into things like that. I drive a Toyota."	"I like vegetables and bananas."	"No I don't have tattoos."	"I like **(Lionel) Messi**."	"I like action movies, ones with Jet Li."	"I don't like video games."
3.	"I listen to most styles of music but R&B in particular."	"I am big fan of the **Mercedes** brand. I currently drive a GL model and my dream car is a **CLS550**."	"A good, old-fashioned steak on a charcoal grill."	"None."	"Roger Federer."	"**'The Godfather.'**"	"Not into video games at all."

— **Anson Wainwright**

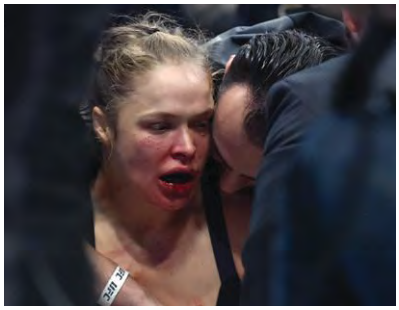
GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

GOOD

The story of an unforgettable Nov. 14 was Ronda Rousey losing, not the accomplishment of Holly Holm. That's understandable given the immense hype surrounding Rousey going into the fight but unfortunate for the winner, whose second-round knockout was the MMA equivalent of Buster Douglas stopping Mike Tyson. Holm came into the fight with underestimated ability, a perfect game plan and the confidence to take down an opponent many believed was invincible. She made history. That shouldn't be overlooked amid all the continuing hoopla surrounding Rousey. I don't think Holm's upset was a victory for boxing. This was an MMA fight, not a boxing match. And while Holm boxed professionally, she started as a kickboxer. Also, the key blows that led to the Rousey's demise – a forearm and later a kick to the face – were MMA moves. That said, please forgive us if we boxing fans take some pride in Holm's accomplishment. She did box for more than a decade, successfully so. That was evident in the hard, straight punches that set up the knockout of Rousey. On fight night it felt as if it was one of our own who was trying to do the impossible even if the fight took place in a cage. Well done, Holly.



BAD

You know you've gone wrong when Floyd Mayweather Jr. handles himself with more class than you do. That was the situation with many fans – many of them boxing fans – who attacked Rousey as viciously with their words as Holm did with her fists and feet after the fight. An untold number of those on social media reacted with absolute glee, reveling in the fact the supposedly unbeatable fighter was beaten to a pulp. Why? Because of the hype? Because she was confident in herself? Because for whatever reason you don't like her? Mayweather handled it properly in spite of the vitriol they've exchanged in recent months. He said it was inappropriate to, in effect, kick her when she was down and even offered to work with her on her boxing. Good for him. Too bad the fans didn't have the same compassion. Celebrate Holm's victory; that would be terrific. Tell us "I told you so" if you really did. Great. But brutal attacks? Of course, we have freedom of speech in the United States. You can say whatever you want. I just don't get the inclination to tear down so passionately someone who has brought so much excitement to the sports world and simply did her best.

WORSE

Antonio Tarver is a smart guy, as he demonstrates every time he serves as a television analyst. That's one reason I can't figure out what goes through his mind when it comes to performance-enhancing drugs. Tarver, a four-time light heavyweight titleholder, tested positive for steroids before his 2012 fight against Lateef Kayode in California and was suspended for a year. He didn't fight for almost 18 months. Lesson learned? Apparently not. Tarver allegedly failed another drug test before his fight against Steve Cunningham this past August in New Jersey, this time for synthetic testosterone. Tarver, 47, denies that he knowingly took any banned substance and reportedly had planned to appeal the failed test, which means this incident wasn't fully adjudicated when this issue went to press. Tarver's denial is hard to believe – don't they all deny it? – but we must wait for the result of the appeal to make a final judgment. I can say this, though: If it's true, Tarver, a very good fighter, will be remembered as much for his PED violations as his considerable success inside the ropes. That would be a shame for a guy with his level of talent.

ROUSEY/HOLM5:: PAUL CROCK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES;SMITH: DAVE THOMPSON

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

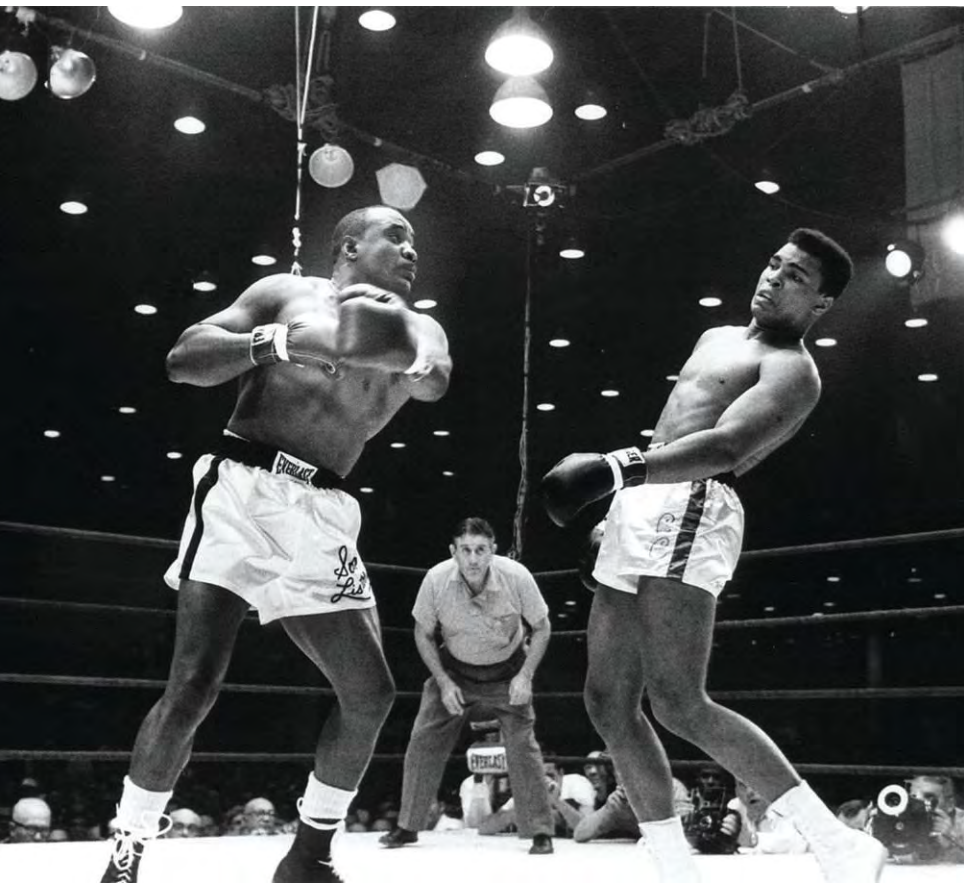
More than 70 percent of those who took part in this poll agree with the judges on the Nov. 21 superfight, although they generally thought it was closer than the officials did. We asked: **How did you score the Canelo Alvarez-Miguel Cotto fight?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

28.54	116-112 ALVAREZ
22.54	115-113 ALVAREZ
12.31	117-111 ALVAREZ
12.26	DRAW
10.00	115-113 COTTO
3.37	118-110 ALVAREZ
3.23	119-109 ALVAREZ
2.81	OTHER
2.06	116-112 COTTO
1.79	119-109 COTTO
.55	118-110 COTTO
.53	117-111 COTTO

NOTE: 5,630 READERS VOTED

MUHAMMAD ALI



Muhammad Ali said shortly after he stopped George Foreman in 1974 that his 1964 fight against Sonny Liston was his toughest.

We recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of the third Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier bout, known as "The Thrilla in Manila," which was THE RING Fight of the Year for 1975.

In honor of this historic heavyweight contest, which Ali won when Frazier retired after 14 rounds, we hunted through our archives to bring you a treasure from the February 1975 issue. By then, "The Greatest" had already shared the ring with most of the terrific fighters with whom he would become inextricably linked. Shortly after defeating George Foreman, Ali decided to reveal who he personally felt had tested him the most during his illustrious championship career.

The feature was authored by Ali with Bob Goodman. Here's how it went:

Can Frank Sinatra name his 10 favorite songs? Could a child list his 10 favorite candy bars? Can Jim Brown rattle off his 10 favorite football games? And make those in order of preference? I doubt it. At least not without changing the lists many times over.

I guess I have been asked to name "my toughest fights" at least a hundred times. And I have probably come up with as many different replies. It's difficult because I consider all of my fights tough and all my opponents worthy.

Until this time I don't think I've ever had to sit down and give it thought. Running true to form if you asked me the same question next week, my list might change again.

I've had too many milestones in my career to possibly think of picking fights on their importance.

There was probably no bigger challenge in my career than the one George Foreman posed in Kinshasa, Zaire. Strangely, although regaining my crown will remain one of my greatest thrills, it wasn't one of my toughest fights.

The toughest would be my fight with Sonny Liston, when I won the title in 1964.

I was young and a great admirer of Liston's talent. He could do just about everything except dance. But outside of myself, there's never really been a dancin' heavyweight. Liston had a tremendous jab, could punch with either hand, was smart in the ring and as strong as any heavyweight I'd ever seen.

He was ugly, too. In and out of the ring. Being a big underdog and acting crazy at the weigh-in made everybody think that I was scared half to death.

Sonny came out at the bell looking to take me apart. I moved and stuck, knowing that I was gaining control in the second round. But the "Bear" was always dangerous. Stalking, glaring, mean.

About the fourth round my eyes stated burning. Finally, when I came back to my corner, I couldn't see at all. I figured Liston had something on his gloves and asked Angelo (Dundee) to cut my gloves off. He didn't but gave my eyes a good wash, checked Liston's corner, talked to the referee and tried to stall for more time.

The bell rang but my eyes were still burning and watering. Angelo gave me a good pat on the rear end and said "keep moving."

Half-blinded, only seeing a blurred hulk, coming at me, I got on my bicycle. Luckily, I had enough instinct, speed and, yes, fear, to keep from getting tagged by the chasing Liston until my eyes started to clear.

I think he used up a lot chasing me and missing those big punches. He was tired and I knew I had regained control.

Like a wounded animal, with eyes swollen and cut, Sonny came out with a surge in the sixth round and connected with a good right hand but he couldn't keep it going and I ended the round feeling like I was the new champ. But I was still very relieved to see big Sonny remain on his stool when the bell rang for the seventh.

I still respect him as one of the truly great heavyweights of all time.

Next, I'd say would be the Doug Jones fight in 1963. Jones had just come off a big knockout of Zora Folley. He was smart and hungry. I had put a lot of pressure on myself with predicting and tried to make it come true. The Garden was jammed and Jones was from New York.

All night long the determined Jones kept getting me with a looping right hand. He'd move in relentlessly and lead with the right. He was just throwing me off stride and I was very happy to be awarded a close decision.

Here I go, getting myself in deep trouble. That's because I don't know who could have been tougher than Joe Frazier the first time we met. He was really something that night, March 8, 1971. I'll never forget the date.

Joe just kept coming. I thought that I won that fight but I don't do the judging. Everybody remembers that one so I don't have to go into it. He was a great heavyweight that night. His style will give me a tough fight every time.

Ken Norton was tough both times we fought. He broke my jaw in the first one, which I wasn't in condition for. The second time, in Los Angeles, I was ready and won the early rounds but had to pull a split decision out in the last round.

Norton's strength and jerky rhythm throws me off, and like Frazier, will always be a tough one for me to conquer.

I know the name Karl Mildenberger might not strike fear in to many men's hearts but he was a rough one for me to figure.

I fought him in Germany in 1966. He was a southpaw and I had a lot of trouble getting untracked against his style. He could box pretty well and whacked me with a few good punches. I didn't get him until the 12th round in what everyone figured would be an easy fight.

In my second fight since my layoff of over three years, Oscar "Ringo" Bonavena gave me a real tough 15 rounds.

Bonavena, short, awkward and strong, did everything but hit me in the kneecaps trying to win that one. I finally caught him coming in with a left hook in the 15th round. I was glad it was over after a grueling fight.

Then in 1972, I met light heavyweight champ Bob Foster in Lake Tahoe. I always respected him as possibly the greatest of all 175-pounders but I never figured he could handle me.

For almost four rounds, I laid on him and used my 41-pound advantage to tire him out. When I figured I had him weary, he started jabbing. I couldn't believe he was out-jabbing me, the master of the jab. His jabs were sharp and hard. He caught me with some good combinations and shook me a couple of times.

For the first time in my career, I was cut with a crisp jab. He also had me swollen under the other eye and cut in the mouth but the weight took its toll and he went down for the seventh and final time in the eighth round.

I was glad I got him at 34 and he didn't have an extra 15 or 20 pounds.

It might sound funny but Jimmy Ellis, who was formerly my chief sparring partner, gave me a tough night in the Houston Astrodome. Jimmy, who probably knew me and my moves better than I knew myself, was as smart as they came. He had pride and was a world champion too.

For seven or eight rounds, Jimmy gave me fits. He darted in and out and kept me under pressure with a good scientific fight. I started getting to him about the ninth round and the referee stopped it in the 12th.

Up jumped Joe Frazier again and as you can guess, it was another tough one but I wound up with the decision this time.

Joe was still his relentless self as he seemed to get stronger as the fight went on. I thought I had him going early in the fight but there was a little mix-up with the bell and the ref stepped in too early.

The fight was a good one and Joe remains high on my list in more ways than one. We are even at one and one. Maybe someday we can have the rubber match to settle the score. Joe would like that too.

Those are 10, which I was asked for, but there are more that seem to belong in that Top 10.

Jerry Quarry, in our first fight in Atlanta, was coming strong in the third when I stopped him on a cut. But that was my first fight back after the layoff and Quarry was probably too tough a choice. I was very fortunate to have had the fight stopped on a cut, which was a bad one.

Joe Bugner, the European champion, game me a tough 12-round decision fight in Las Vegas. That's another fight that people figured with be easy but Bugner was determined, clever and fast.

Mac Foster gave me a grueling 15 rounds in Tokyo, Japan, that had to be one of my toughest fights from a physical standpoint.

Alvin "Blue" Lewis, whom I stopped in 11 in Dublin, Ireland, gave me much more trouble than I bargained for. I did have a bad cold going into the fight but that's no excuse. Lewis was a good heavyweight who needed more breaks.

Speaking about tough, I don't know who was ever tougher on me physically than "Granite Jaw" George Chuvalo. He gave me two tough distance fights for a total of 27 rounds and took everything I had to dish out and kept coming for more.

Henry Cooper, one of England's greatest, sat me on my pants in London and was without a doubt one of the best I had met. His big trouble was tissue-paper skin.

Ernie Terrell, who is now making it as a singer with his own group, gave a tough account of himself against me at the Astrodome for the undisputed world championship in a fight I won over the 15-round distance.

As I said, they were all tough. I've never really had an easy one.

There will be more tough fights in the ring for me. But my toughest of all fights is still to come when I retire from boxing. That will be my continued fight to help my people.

THE RING MAGAZINE

By **David Greisman**

COLD WAR II

PROMOTERS' UNWILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER LEAVES BOXING IN A FAMILIAR – AND FRUSTRATING – POSITION

There was nothing Dickensian about 2015. It wasn't the best of times. It wasn't the worst of times, either. But whatever good news there was from the past 12 months has been and will continue to be outweighed by the bad.

Yes, there was progress that should be celebrated. Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao finally fought each other and broke all pay-per-view and revenue records, although the boring one-night jackpot turned off most of those casual viewers who otherwise may have continued to invest their time and money in boxing's future.

Beyond that, Miguel Cotto and Canelo Alvarez collided in a highly anticipated match, Wladimir Klitschko and Tyson Fury headlined in front of a large crowd and Carl Frampton and Scott Quigg signed to meet in 2016. Roman Gonzalez, pound-for-pound the best fighter in the world, was introduced to the wider audience he long deserved. "Premier Boxing Champions" vastly increased the number of boxing matches being broadcast on television.

The problems that existed, however, tended to be along the lines of what hampered boxing before. Almost any time the sport has a shot at moving forward, it winds up shooting itself in the foot. And it's fitting, then, that this is the result of boxing's version of an arms race — another Cold War to replace the previous one. And as with World War II, many of the warring factions are familiar faces, with the addition of new allies and enemies.

For years the Cold War was between Golden Boy and Top Rank, two promoters whose executives could barely stand each other, never mind work together. The rare occasions they did cooperate didn't change things.

Both companies staged cards with both major networks, HBO and Showtime. But Golden Boy moved more of its talent to Showtime, Top Rank's dealings with Showtime came less often and became less cordial and HBO later stopped working with Golden Boy

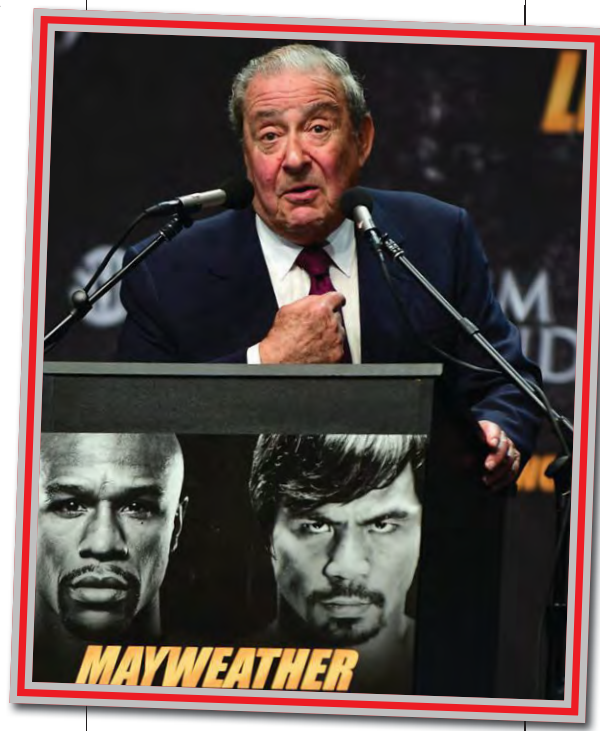
Oscar De La Hoya (photo at left, with Canelo Alvarez) and Bob Arum (below) do business with each other now but not with Al Haymon.

altogether, becoming the main home for fighters with Top Rank and a few other promoters. The Cold War persevered because each side wanted its best boxers to be featured on its respective partner network. That precluded fighters from facing their counterparts across the figurative street.

Then things changed again. Oscar De La Hoya returned from rehab and retook the reins of the company named after him. He and longtime executive Richard Schaefer split. Showtime was angered when Canelo Alvarez, a Golden Boy fighter, moved over to HBO. And then Al Haymon, the powerful boxing adviser who worked with many Golden Boy fighters, decided to part with Golden Boy as well. Most of those fighters weren't under contract with Golden Boy. A legal case left De La Hoya with a chunk of change but a mostly barren cupboard. Showtime continued to work with Haymon but not with Golden Boy. De La Hoya had meanwhile mended fences with Top Rank's Bob Arum.

All of those changes and yet so much is the same. Haymon has his PBC fights on a number of networks, plus a significant majority of the cards on Showtime. Some promoters do work with him while others rely upon HBO and supplement that with dates on smaller networks.

So while we got to see a notable Golden Boy vs. Top Rank fight this past fall (Lucas Matthysse vs. Viktor Postol) on HBO, the stars with those promoters won't get a chance to face those with Haymon. Ditto with Sergey Kovalev (the top name with Main Events) and anyone else signed to an exclusive deal with HBO, including Gennady Golovkin and Andre Ward. Roc Nation Sports, which has Ward and Miguel Cotto, doesn't have a working relationship with Haymon either — as we saw when it successfully bid for the right to stage a Peter Quillin fight in 2014 and Quillin proceeded to drop his world title instead.



With Haymon signing more and more fighters, the pickings become even slimmer, then, for some of the top names in some very deep divisions. Kovalev will now only fight Adonis Stevenson if the bout is on HBO, which explains why we're seeing an unnecessary rematch between Kovalev and Jean Pascal instead. At least Kovalev and Ward are expected to fight one another at the end of 2016. Golovkin's bout with David Lemieux was the first time another major middleweight was willing to step in the ring with him. Many of the others, namely Quillin and Daniel Jacobs, have been on Showtime or PBC cards.

Alvarez could face Golovkin after beating Cotto on Nov. 21 but we won't see him in with the Charlo brothers or Julian Williams at 154. Tim Bradley still wants to be a top welterweight in the post-Mayweather and potentially post-Pacquiao era. He won't be able to prove that against Danny Garcia, Amir Khan, Lamont Peterson, Shawn Porter, Errol Spence and Keith Thurman. Viktor Postol and Terence Crawford can't attempt to humble fellow junior welterweight Adrien Broner. And Vasyl Lomachenko has no hope of a rematch with Gary Russell Jr. or bouts against Jesus Cuellar, Abner Mares and Leo Santa Cruz.

Those aligned with Haymon aren't complaining. They tend to have a number of potential opportunities and they are paid well even when they go forever without facing a good foe, as we saw with Stevenson's pitiful 2015. Still, the adviser was behind some very good matchups this year — Danny Garcia vs. Lamont Peterson, Santa Cruz vs. Mares, Broner vs. Porter and the pleasant surprises that were Marco Huck vs. Krzysztof Glowacki and Andrzej Fonfara vs. Nathan Cleverly.

A couple of these fights should've happened long ago anyway, but Haymon held off on them until they were part of his venture. Showtime was left with the scraps for most of 2015 and then landed Jacobs vs. Quillin in December. Both Haymon's cards and HBO's still had far too many mismatches. Ratings for most broadcasts haven't been remarkable.

Next year doesn't look like it will be much different either. If 2015 was neither the best of times nor the worst of times, then we shouldn't go into 2016 with great expectations.

ARUM: FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; DE LA HOYA: JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

THE CASE FOR KEEPING BOXING IN THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

ENDURING PUNISHMENT IN BOXING CAN PREPARE A SOLDIER FOR ACTUAL BATTLE

Boxing and the military have long been intertwined.

The United States Military Academy at West Point, the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis and the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs have boxing courses that are required for the young men who attend the academies. At Annapolis, women are required to participate in boxing classes too.

The New York Times ran a front-page article in September that focused on the concussions suffered in West Point's boxing program. The thrust of the article was that these programs constitute a barbaric tradition that should end.

Boxing was installed as a required course at the United States Military Academy in 1905 at the suggestion of President Theodore Roosevelt. At West Point today, all plebes (first-year cadets) take a boxing class consisting of 19 45-minute "lessons" that prepare them for three "test" bouts.

Owing largely to similar requirements at Annapolis

and Colorado Springs, the three service academies have won 28 of the past 33 National Collegiate Boxing Association championships.

Boxing is not required for students who enroll in the Reserve Officer Training Corps at other colleges, nor is it part of the basic training for regular military enlistees.

In its article, The Times noted that there have been 97 documented concussions from boxing at West Point during the past three academic years. That equates to roughly three percent of all male plebes. The Air Force Academy has reported 72 concussions during that time frame and the Naval Academy 29.

The Times article further stated, "Minor concussions become major disruptions to cadets' lives because West Point medical protocols require any cadet with a concussion to rest for at least two days, skipping all academic work, sports and military training."

And it quoted Brenda Sue Fulton (a West Point graduate who is chairwoman of West Point's civilian advisory committee), who said, "There is an argument that whatever benefit a cadet gains from boxing, the cost of missing studies, of missing training, of becoming more vulnerable to injury down range, are detrimental to military readiness. It's possible, by trying to prepare our cadets, we are making them less ready."

Plebes who are forced to drop out of the cadet boxing course due to a concussion are required to complete the course the following year.

Are the required boxing courses a good idea?

Let's start with the understanding that service-academy training is rigorous in other ways as well. The Times acknowledged that boxing is the cause of only 20 percent of the concussions suffered by West Point cadets and a quarter of the concussions suffered at Annapolis and Colorado Springs.

Moreover, the ultimate purpose of the boxing classes isn't to teach boxing skills. It's to instill mental toughness and teach disciplined aggression, to show young men how to face their fears and prepare them for that moment down the road in military combat when they have only themselves to rely on.

Cadets graduate from the United States Military Academy as second lieutenants. Many of them are soon in the field, leading other soldiers in combat. The curriculum at West Point is designed to put them under pressure. Each student is tested in and out of class in multiple ways every day.

Boyd Melson graduated from West Point in 2003. After fulfilling his service commitment, he turned to professional boxing and has compiled a 15-1-1 record as of this writing.

"When you're in combat," Melson told me last year, "it's not about American freedom at that particular moment in time. It's about you and your buddies surviving. In boxing, you're trying to hurt someone to win and that person is trying to hurt you. You learn to think and make decisions under stress. You train your mind to not give up before your body does. Military combat is far more serious than boxing but some of the demands are the same."

Then Melson talked about a fight he had against Donald Ward on Feb. 12, 2014, at Roseland Ballroom in New York. In Round 3, Boyd injured his brachial plexus (a network of nerve fibers running from the spine through his neck into his right arm).

"The pain was excruciating," Melson recalled. "I couldn't control my arm. I couldn't feel my fingers in my glove. I thought I was having a stroke. My first thought was, 'I don't know what's happening to my body. I'm scared. I have to quit.' I started to turn to take a knee. Then I thought about my training at West Point. To survive in combat and in the ring, you slow time down around you when, in reality, real time is taking place. You gut it out and do whatever you have to do to survive. That's what I did that night."

From that point on, Melson was a wounded soldier. But he survived and won a majority decision.

"Of all my fights, that's the one that's the most meaningful to me," Melson concluded. "It confirmed what I've always believed about myself; that I can overcome the worst kind of adversity and do what I have to do to prevail. The idea of quitting kept trying to creep into my head. But I was able to block out worrying about my injury and stay in the moment when I couldn't move my arm and didn't know what had happened to me and suppress the fear and do what I had to do to win. Boxing is the ultimate experience for testing physical ability and intelligence under threat of the greatest adverse consequences possible short of death."

Mike Tyson once said, "Everyone has a plan until they get hit."

In combat, every commanding officer has a plan until his troops are attacked. Then things can change.

West Point isn't Princeton. The military isn't Wall Street. The service academies have a mission. They're training young men and women to be elite soldiers. Combat isn't a video game. It's real.

The idea of being punched in the face is frightening. And if it has happened before with adverse consequences, the idea of it happening again is even more frightening. But a bloody nose can prepare a soldier for far more serious battlefield wounds. And having learned how to face the fear of physical harm, soldiers are better equipped to face whatever else might come their way. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hurting Sport: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press.

ON THE BOOKSHELF

Ezzard Charles (left) gave the great Rocky Marciano hell in two fights.

EZZARD CHARLES: AN UNDERAPPRECIATED CHAMPION

William Dettloff calls Ezzard Charles "one of the best prizefighters who ever lived." "Ezzard Charles: A Boxing Life" (McFarland & Company) supports that thesis.

Charles was born in Georgia in 1921, raised in Cincinnati by his maternal grandmother and turned pro for a $5 purse on March 12, 1940. Over the course of 19 years, he amassed a ring record of 95-25-1 (52 knockouts). He was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease) in 1966, suffered through the inevitable physical horrors that followed and died at age 53.

How good was Charles?

He began his career as a middleweight and fought his way to the heavyweight championship of the world. He was undefeated against Archie Moore (3-0), Joey Maxim (5-0) and Charley Burley (2-0); had winning records against Jimmy Bivins (4-1) and Lloyd Marshall (2-1); and won three of seven bouts against Joe Louis (1-0), Jersey Joe Walcott (2-2) and Rocky Marciano (0-2). In his last 29 fights, he suffered 17 losses and was knocked out five times. Remove those fights from his record and Charles' ledger is more in keeping with the fighter he was.

Charles fought in an era when baseball and boxing were America's two national sports. "Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson," Dettloff writes, "were as famous as any movie stars. Every fighter who held a world title was a household name."

But Charles never achieved the acclaim that his more heralded contemporaries enjoyed.

"Some guys had the gift of gab or a thunderous punch or a great back story," Dettloff recounts. "Some had unusual charisma or presence. Charles had none of these. He wasn't a palooka. He didn't talk in broken or mangled English. He didn't get a big push from the mob. He'd never done any jail time. He didn't get into fistfights outside the ring or get caught

in pictures with lily-white prostitutes. ... Charles was never anyone's hero. Not the way he should have been. American sports fans were looking for a hero who was as good as (Joe) Louis in the same exact way. It never occurred to them that there was more than one way to be great."

Charles' problem – or one of them, anyway – was that he succeeded Louis as heavyweight champion of the world.

Louis had been Charles' boyhood idol. He'd listened to the Brown Bomber's fights on the radio and kept a scrapbook with newspaper clippings that detailed Louis' ring conquests.

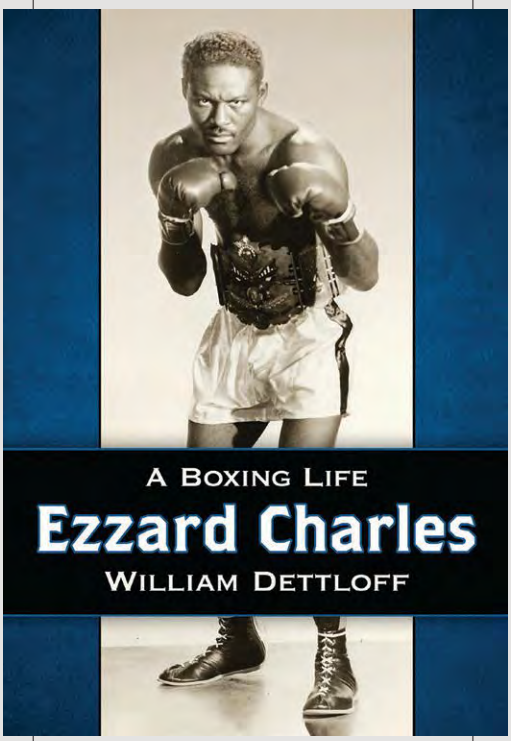
In 1949, after Louis temporarily retired, Charles decisioned Jersey Joe Walcott to claim the vacant heavyweight throne. The following year, he successfully defended his championship against Louis. That left him with a predicament similar to the one that Larry Holmes faced when he followed Muhammad Ali.

"I'm a little disappointed," Charles said of his situation. "I thought that, after I whipped Joe Louis, the fans would accept me as a true heavyweight champion. But now I know they want a bigger, different type champ. Joe made those quick knockouts popular. It's a bit tough on the guy that follows him."

In a similar vein, Rocky Marciano observed, "I was at ringside the night Ezzard defeated Joe Louis. It was a real good fight. But as I was leaving, all the people seemed to be talking about Joe. In the papers the next day, the same thing. Everybody seemed to be crying for the loser. Nobody gave any credit to Ezzard. People just didn't want to see Louis lose. It wasn't Ezzard's fault. He has simply come along in a time in history when a blood-hungry public couldn't appreciate him."

Dettloff's book has strengths and flaws. Clearly, he thoroughly researched his subject. But there are some factual errors, such as saying that Charles died in 1973 (the actual date of death was May 28, 1975).

Also, there are times when Dettloff writes extremely well about what it meant to be a fighter in Charles' day: "Poor boys from the worst ghettos could turn themselves into something in the fight game. If they were any good, they'd hear a crowd cheer for them; they'd get a few dames that were hotter and looser than what they'd get otherwise; and maybe they'd get their name in the paper once or twice. Plus they'd get to know the singular joy of cracking a man on the jaw with a perfect left hook. They'd find out how it felt to dominate another man, to make him quit. It could make a poor nothing from the neighborhood a god for a few minutes."



Similarly, in one of the book's better passages, Dettloff describes "that strange world that all fighters come to know eventually. Where you can see the ringsiders cheering but can't hear them; when you can see the referee's face up close to yours, but it's behind a blanket of fog, and you can tell he's saying something but don't understand the language."

But "Ezzard Charles: A Boxing Life" doesn't have the nuanced texture of Russell Sullivan's masterful biography of Rocky Marciano or Michael Isenberg's seminal work on John L. Sullivan. After a while, the fight reports become repetitive. And with some notable exceptions (such as Charles vs. Joe Louis and the two Marciano-Charles encounters), Dettloff is prone to recounting major bouts with no more drama than less important ones.

That said, "Ezzard Charles: A Boxing Life" makes a compelling case for its subject's ring greatness. Although never given the opportunity to fight for the 175-pound world title, Charles was unquestionably one of the greatest light heavyweights of all time.

"The heavyweight version of Charles," Dettloff sums up, "would get a lot of good work done. But on the best day of his life, he was no more a heavyweight than Ray Robinson. He never would be as good there as he was at light heavy and below."

★

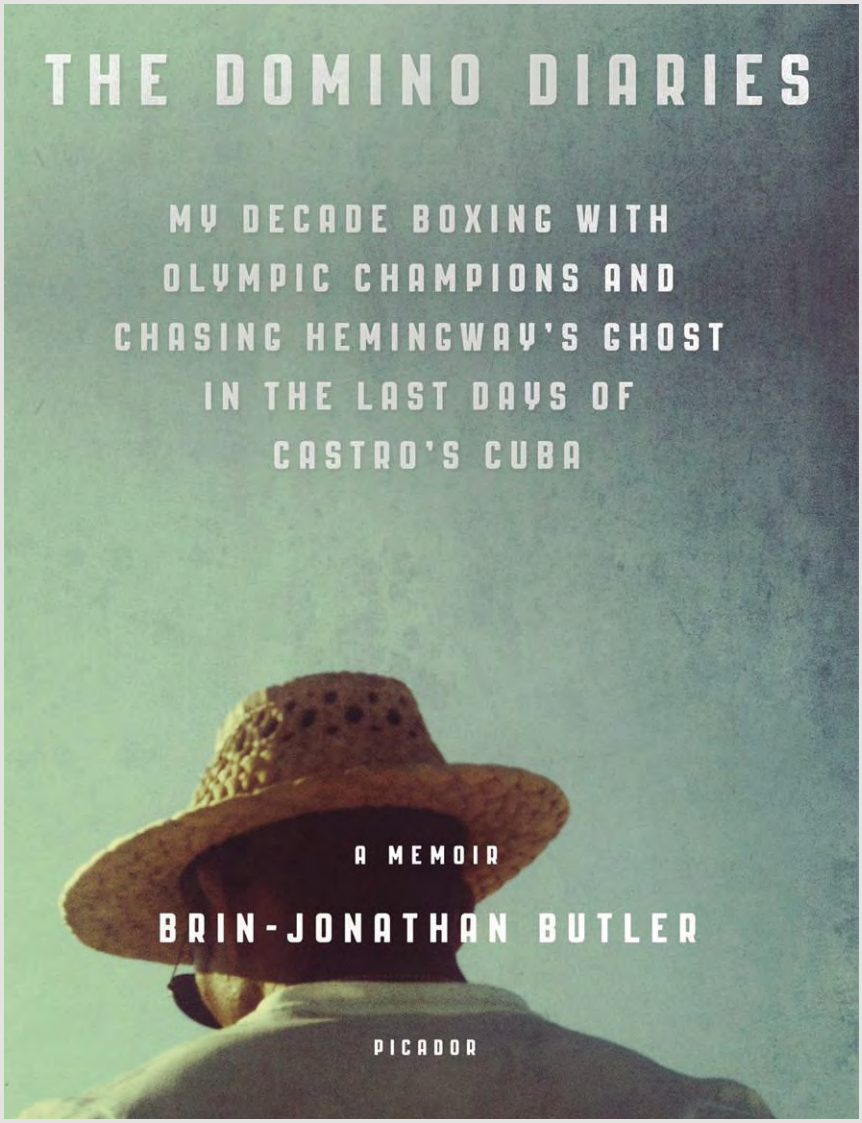
Brin-Jonathan Butler's new book, "The Domino Diaries" (Picador Publishers), opens with a chapter entitled "How Did This White Mother f---er Get Inside My House?"

That's the way Mike Tyson introduced himself on Easter Sunday 2010, when, speaking through "a thick cloud of marijuana smoke," he descended the staircase in his Henderson, Nevada, home for an interview with Butler.

The Tyson-Butler encounter is only a small part of "The Domino Diaries." But it sets the tone and gives readers a feel for both Tyson and Butler.

One of the next thoughts Tyson uttered was, "I'm guessing you being

ELMER MARTINEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



here in my home, sitting across from me right now – I'm guessing this is pretty intense for you, huh?"

"The Domino Diaries" is a personal memoir with boxing ever-present in the background. The opening portions are devoted largely to Butler's fragile early family life and torturous adolescence. "Getting beat up [at age eleven by a mob of classmates]," he writes, "changed my life forever."

There was a brief stint as an amateur boxer.

"You can't learn to take a punch," Butler observes. "Whether you have a glass chin or you don't, the only way of finding out is having it land." That observation is joined with reminiscences like, "I knew I was going to get hurt. And any time you got hurt, there was a chance you could spend the rest of your life picking up the pieces."

Ultimately, Butler's life adventure led him to Cuba. Much of his time there was devoted to experiences culminating in a film documentary that explored the reasons why Cubans remain on the island or flee, as examined through the prism of its most celebrated boxers.

Butler writes lyrically and well.

Recreating a fight card in Havana, he recalls, "They were watching sports in a way that the rest of the world could only dream about. While the fights lasted, it was pure. No interviews. No cameras. No advertising. No commercial breaks. No merchandise. No thanking of sponsors. No luxury boxes. No Tecate or Corona ring girls. No VIP seating. No scalpers outside. No venue named after a corporation or corporately owned anything anywhere. No air conditioning or even fans to mitigate how f---ing hot it was in there. No amenities of any kind. Instead, you had a full auditorium of intensely proud people who didn't require cues to cheer. Without the incentive of money, I watched people fight harder in the ring than anywhere else I'd ever seen. And they fought this way before an audience who cheered louder than anywhere I'd ever heard."

Butler crafts a particularly poignant portrait of Teofilo Stevenson, the intensely handsome, 6-foot-5 giant who won Olympic gold medals in the heavyweight division at the 1972 Munich, 1976 Montreal, and 1980 Moscow Olympics. He was favored to win a fourth gold medal in 1984 but Cuba was among the Communist countries that boycotted the Los Angeles Games.

In 1976, Stevenson was offered $5 million to leave Cuba and fight Muhammad Ali. He declined.

Butler interviewed Stevenson in his modest Havana home in May 2011.

"By now," Butler writes, "Stevenson was a full blown alcoholic without enough money to replace a flat tire on his car. Yet while his life remained an open wound, I saw no evidence of regret."

The price that Butler paid for the interview was $130 and a bottle of vodka.

Stevenson died 13 months later at age 60. His conversation with Butler was his last known filmed interview.

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This RING belt was among those stolen.

HOME INVASION

At 2:45 a.m. on Nov. 5 in Canastota, New York, an alarm was triggered at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Police arrived to find that a window had been broken, three display cases had been smashed and six championship belts, two of them inscribed to **Tony Zale** and the other four to **Carmen Basilio**, were gone.

In the press interviews that followed, it was clear that residents of Canastota felt as if they'd had their own doors kicked in. Understandably so. Without Canastota there is no Basilio (he was born there in 1927) and without Basilio there is no Hall (he, along with nephew Billy Backus, inspired the IBHOF's creation in 1982). It would be wrong to complete the triangle and say that without the Hall there is no Canastota but fair to say an invasion of one is an attack on both. They are as tightly interwoven as any fighter's silk robe.

"It's disrespect to the entire town," 19-year-old local Alyssa DiVeronica told The New York Times.

She's right. Every year the 3.3-square mile village hosts a parade with baton-twirling teenagers and classic convertibles carrying fighters to a celebration of such undivided affection for the sport of boxing that you'd think Induction Weekend was a national holiday. In fact, the next time someone gets in your face about how boxing is a pastime limited to Paleolithic sadists, you can shut them down with one word: Canastota.

The loss was also felt by the people behind this magazine. Five of the six items were RING belts, including one for Zale's third-round knockout of **Rocky Graziano** in 1948 and another for Basilio's victory over **Ray Robinson** in 1957.

But why these six belts when so many other treasures were left untouched? Does a black market for boxing belts really exist and would somebody really buy them just to lock them away? The whole thing is strange. At the time of publication, the FBI's Antiquities Bureau was said to be involved. Hopefully some answers will surface.

Actor **Sylvester Stallone** will put up a trove of memorabilia from the "Rocky" movies for legal purchase in a late-December auction. The items include Rocky's trademark fedora, blood-stained trunks, Apollo Creed's "Living in America" costume and yes … a RING belt.

Up-and-coming junior middleweight **Prichard Colon** lost by disqualification to **Terrel Williams** during a PBC on NBC card in Virginia on Oct. 17 and collapsed in his dressing room afterward. He underwent surgery for bleeding on his brain and remained in a coma at press time, though his condition was described as "improving." Ironically it might've been the DQ that gave him a chance at survival, as Colon's corner mistakenly began to remove his gloves before he could come out for another round.

Former light heavyweight contender **Yusaf Mack** was thrust into controversy when a porn scene featuring him having sex with two other men emerged. At first Mack vehemently proclaimed his heterosexuality and said he'd been drugged but withdrew that story when the production company, Dawg Pound USA, threatened to sue. Mack, who said he was exhausted by pretending after one of his 10 children told him to kill himself, later admitted that he is gay.

Former heavyweight champion **Vitali Klitschko** was re-elected as mayor of Ukraine's capital city, Kiev, after receiving 66.5 percent of the vote in a runoff.

Clifford Etienne, who is serving a 105-year sentence (reduced from 150) in Louisiana for various crimes including the attempted murder of a police officer, was reportedly almost killed during an attack in prison. The former heavyweight contender was in the room where he slept and spent his spare time painting when the incident occurred. Etienne's paintings sell "very well" on the outside, according to his business manager, Lynn O'Shea. One of them hangs in the New Orleans police department.

And at the University of Utah, biology professor **David Carrier** used human cadaver arms on a pendulum to test his theory that thumbs evolved so males could punch harder with clenched fists ("Paleolithic sadists!"). The results were encouraging, said Carrier. Thus a blow was struck to the competing theory that thumbs evolved so judges could write shady scorecards.

KNOW YOUR WORTH

BOXERS SHOULD BE CLEAR ON THE VALUE THEY BRING TO THE TABLE

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who – through contributor Joseph Santoliquito – gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan.

There have been a lot of times throughout my career when I knew I was worth more than what I was being offered for a fight. It's a game all promoters and managers like to play and it's something that's been going on ever since guys were paid to punch.

It's why every time I give advice to a young fighter I tell them to know their worth, be knowledgeable about what kind of gate you draw and what your numbers are when you fight on TV.

I liked to know everything. I still do. I had trusted people around me but the person that you have to rely on and trust the most, especially in boxing, is yourself. No one should know more about your business than you do.

When I was offered a rematch with Roy Jones in 2004, they put up around $3.5 million. It would have been the biggest payday of my career and I turned it down. I knew I was worth more than that. People were calling me crazy for turning it down.

Bernard Hopkins (left) passed on a rematch with Roy Jones Jr. for a more lucrative fight with Oscar De La Hoya (facing page).

DE LA HOYA: STEPHEN CHERNIN/GETTY IMAGES; JONES: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

I was mocked. The press killed me. But I knew my worth.

That's when Oscar De La Hoya, to his credit, came forward and offered me a fight at 155 pounds that paid me more than three times more than what Roy Jones offered. I didn't even know Oscar was going to do that. I knew my value. When a fighter knows their value, it's not only in boxing, it's in every area of life, and they call the shots.

I didn't let emotions – and ego – interfere with my value. Ego is important here, too, because too many guys get filled up with people surrounding them telling them how great they are. I was, and am, fortunate to have people around me tell me the truth. I still made the decisions but I knew the truth.

I stuck with my convictions. I always said I was different. But you have to show and prove to the fans that you're different, that you're special.

I knew that Roy had a license fee that would have given me the money that I would have accepted at the time. But like any businessman, or greedy man, he wanted to take 80 percent of the money and give me 20 percent based on what he thought his value was and what he thought mine was at the time.

He was wrong.

At the end of the day, regrettably, most fighters don't call the shots. Most of them can't. Some want their hand held. It hurts boxing and hurts the credibility of the sport.

Make your mind up. Know your worth. Go for the money. Go for the money fight, like Evander Holyfield waiting and waiting and waiting for Mike Tyson. Holyfield knew his value.

I want to see the best fight the best, no matter what weight class it is. We need undisputed titles to tell fight fans who is the best in each division. The only way that's going to happen is with pressure from the media, pressure from the networks and communication with the businesspeople who sometimes push fighters in the wrong direction.

That's because guys don't know their value. They've been forced to accept fights that aren't lucrative super fights; they're positioning fights.

I think Canelo Alvarez knows his worth. I think Gennady Golovkin knows his worth. It's why I agree that a Canelo-Golovkin fight in 2016, if it happens, is the Hagler-Hearns of this generation.

It's the fighter that has to make the call. That attitude has always worked for me and continues to work for me as I enter another phase of my life. Know your value and don't accept anything less.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

CANELO ALVAREZ

By **Michael Rosenthal**

One day we'll look back on Canelo Alvarez's career and the result from Nov. 21, 2015, will stand out.

Alvarez has other important victories. Decisions over Shane Mosley, Austin Trout and Erislandy Lara were among his most notable. However, those triumphs don't rise to the level of Alvarez's unanimous-decision victory over Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas for obvious reasons:

Cotto was a future Hall of Famer in good form when he stepped into the ring with Alvarez. And the young Mexican beat him handily.

I personally would've liked to have seen more from Alvarez, who I think did more than enough to win but not enough to thrill a pro-Alvarez crowd at the Mandalay Bay Events Center. Everyone, it seemed, waited for a knockout that never came.

Still, it was an impressive victory. Alvarez, whose defensive skills are

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: NAOKI FUKUDA

underrated, was difficult to hit. When Cotto, the naturally smaller man, was able to land, his punches had no effect on the winner.

And while Alvarez didn't throw many punches, he landed at a high percentage – 40 percent of his power punches. He never seriously hurt Cotto but his heavy blows were eye-catching and obviously were the difference in the fight.

Again, it wasn't a spectacular performance. Alvarez would've had to do more to use that adjective.

It was a very good, very important win, though. That's not a bad day at the office. RING

Canelo Alvarez didn't dazzle anyone with his victory over Miguel Cotto but he won by a large margin.

POUND FOR POUND: The "benefit of the doubt" given to Andre Ward (No. 2 last month) soured somewhat after he announced his next opponent would be another gimme, Alexander Brand, and then suffered another injury. He slipped to No. 4, which pushed Sergey Kovalev and Gennady Golovkin to Nos. 2 and 3, respectively. An HBO deal was later reported that could lead to a Ward-Kovalev fight in 2016 – so some clarity is finally on the way. Canelo Alvarez then convincingly beat Miguel Cotto and entered at No. 9, ousting No. 10 Kell Brook.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: American Tony Thompson (No. 9 last month) dropped off the list after losing a unanimous decision to Malik Scott (unrated), thus making way for celebrated British Olympic champion Anthony Joshua to crack the ratings at No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Russians Dmitry Kudryashov (No. 8 last month) and Rakhim Chakhkiev (No. 10 last month) were stopped on the same night in their homeland. Both dropped out, Oleksandr Usyk rose a notch to No. 8 and Victor Ramirez (Argentina) and Ola Afolabi (U.K.) became Nos. 9 and 10, respectively. The championship was then rendered vacant after Yoan Pablo Hernandez was stripped for not facing a Top 5 opponent in over 3 ½ years. Since he also hasn't fought anyone at all for over a year he was dropped from the ratings entirely.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Andrzej Fonfara (No. 8 last month) outpointed unrated Nathan Cleverly and switched places with No. 7 Artur Beterbiev as a result. Adonis Stevenson (Champion last month) hasn't fought a Top 5 opponent since Tavoris Cloud more than two years ago, so he was stripped and installed at No. 2. This pushed South Africa's Thomas Oosthuizen (No. 10 last month) off the list.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Callum Smith (No. 10 last month) switched places with Robert Stieglitz (No. 9 last month) after knocking out Rocky Fielding (unrated) in the first round.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: David Lemieux (No. 4 last month) dropped to No. 5 after losing his alphabet title to Gennady Golovkin (No. 1) by eighth-round TKO. Alvarez (No. 1 jr. middleweight last month) became the new champion with his unanimous-decision victory over Cotto.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: American Demetrius Andrade ended a 16-month layoff with a second-round stoppage of Dario Pucheta (unrated) and re-entered the ratings at No. 6. This pushed No. 10 Willie Nelson, also of the U.S., off the list. With Alvarez moving into the driver's seat at middleweight, Erislandy Lara became the new No. 1 with Austin Trout below him at No. 2 and Cotto (middleweight Champion last month) at No. 3.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Canadian Dierry Jean (No. 4 last month) was removed after fighting Terence Crawford at 140 pounds so everyone previously below him moved up and Englishman Anthony Crolla came in at No. 10. Crolla then jumped to No. 7 after winning the WBA title with a fifth-round knockout of Darleys Perez (unrated).

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Frenchman Romain Jacob (No. 9 last month) fell out after being stopped by the unrated Juli Giner and the space created at No. 10 was filled by undefeated Mexican Oscar Valdez. Francisco Vargas (No. 5 last month) staged a remarkable comeback and stopped Takashi Miura (No. 2 at the time) in Round 9 to win the WBC title. Vargas was lifted to No. 2 and Miura dropped to No. 3. Then Californian Saul Rodriguez replaced Valdez at No. 10 after a first-round knockout of Ivan Najera (unrated).

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Ronny Rios, also from California, beat Puerto Rico's Jayson Velez by unanimous decision and replaced him at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Albert Pagara rose from No. 7 to No. 6 with a sixth-round knockout of William Gonzalez (unrated).

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Japan's Koki Kameda {No. 5 last month) dropped off the list after fighting Kohei Kono at 115 pounds; Kameda lost by unanimous decision and announced his retirement afterward. With everyone from No. 6 down moving up a notch, U.S. Olympian Rau'shee Warren entered at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: The previously unrated Kono entered at No. 7 after beating Kameda. To make room, Mexico's Felipe Orucuta (No. 8 last month) was removed for not fighting at 115 pounds for over a year.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

Arthur Abraham defeated Martin Murray by a split decision on Nov. 21, Abraham's fifth successful title defense.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
549 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
423 • Russia • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
107 • U.S. • 35-0-0 (34 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
197 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
215 • Bulgaria • 21-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
88 • U.S. • 19-1-0 (10 KOs)

6. BERMANE STIVERNE
137 • Canada • 25-2-1 (21 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
89 • Ukraine • 21-0-1 (13 KOs)

8. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
54 • Uzbek. • 34-2-1 (21 KOs)

9. CARLOS TAKAM
27 • Cameroon • 32-2-1 (25 KOs)

10. ANTHONY JOSHUA
4 • U.K. • • 14-0-0 (14 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. GRIGORY DROZD
112 • Russia • 40-1-0 (28 KOs)

2. DENIS LEBEDEV
304 • Russia • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)

3. KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI
15 • Poland • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)

4. MARCO HUCK
153 • Germany • 38-3-1 (26 KOs)

5. ILUNGA MAKABU
124 • Congo • 19-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. FIRAT ARSLAN
160 • Germany • 36-8-2 (22 KOs)

7. YOURI KALENGA
75 • Congo • 22-2-0 (15 KOs)

8. OLEKSANDR USYK
8 • Ukraine • 8-0-0 (8 KOs)

9. VICTOR RAMIREZ
3 • Argentina • 22-2-1 (17 KOs)

10. OLA AFOLABI
3 • U.K. • 22-4-4 (11 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
149 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)

2. ADONIS STEVENSON
129 • Canada • 27-1-0 (22 KOs)

3. BERNARD HOPKINS
495 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

4. JEAN PASCAL
124 • Canada • 30-3-1 (17 KOs)

5. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
178 • Germany • 47-2-0 (35 KOs)

6. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
89 • Colombia • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

7. ISAAC CHILEMBA
187 • Malawi • 24-2-2 (10 KOs)

8. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
80 • Poland • 28-3-0 (16 KOs)

9. ARTUR BETERBIEV
50 • Russia • 9-0-0 (9 KOs)

10. YUNIESKI GONZALEZ
18 • Cuba • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
320 • Armenia • 44-4-0 (29 KOs)

2. JAMES DEGALE
129 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

3. BADOU JACK
31 • Sweden • 20-1-1 (12 KOs)

4. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
72 • Mexico • 33-0-0 (24 KOs)

5. ANDRE DIRRELL
65 • U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

6. GEORGE GROVES
207 • U.K. • 21-3-0 (16 KOs)

7. ANTHONY DIRRELL
67 • U.S. • 28-1-1 (22 KOs)

8. FEDOR CHUDINOV
29 • Russia • 14-0-0 (10 KOs)

9. CALLUM SMITH
25 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)

10. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
328 • Russia • 48-5-1 (28 KOs)

MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C CANELO ALVAREZ
1 • Mexico • 46-1-1 (32 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
207 • Kaz. • 34-0-0 (31 KOs)

2. ANDY LEE
50 • Ireland • 34-2-1 (24 KOs)

3. PETER QUILLIN
182 • U.S. • 32-0-1 (23 KOs)

4. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
52 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. DAVID LEMIEUX
26 • Canada • 34-3-0 (31 KOs)

6. DANIEL JACOBS
50 • U.S. • 30-1-0 (27 KOs)

7. HASSAN N'DAM
97 • Cameroon • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. DANIEL GEALE
337 • Australia • 31-4-0 (16 KOs)

9. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
33 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (15 KOs)

10. MICHEL SORO
22 • France • 27-1-1 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ERISLANDY LARA
230 • Cuba • 21-2-2 (12 KOs)

2. AUSTIN TROUT
182 • U.S. • 30-2-0 (17 KOs)

3. MIGUEL COTTO
1 • P.R. • 40-5-0 (33 KOs)

4. JERMELL CHARLO
107 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. JERMALL CHARLO
76 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)

6. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
6 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)

7. VANES MARTIROSYAN
312 • U.S. • 36-2-1 (21 KOs)

8. JULIAN WILLIAMS
50 • U.S. • 21-0-1 (13 KOs)

9. LIAM SMITH
11 • U.K. • 21-0-1 (11 KOs)

10. CARLOS MOLINA
230 • Mexico • 23-6-2 (7 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KELL BROOK
240 • U.K. • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)

2. MANNY PACQUIAO
216 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
82 • U.K. • 31-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
181 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (13 KOs)

5. KEITH THURMAN
142 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (22 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
103 • U.S. • 26-1-1 (16 KOs)

7. DIEGO CHAVES
50 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

8. SADAM ALI
28 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

9. DANNY GARCIA
17 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (18 KOs)

10. ERROL SPENCE
8 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (15 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. VIKTOR POSTOL
119 • Ukraine • 28-0-0 (12 KOs)

2. TERENCE CRAWFORD
32 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (19 KOs)

3. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
155 • Russia • 25-4-0 (18 KOs)

4. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
242 • Argentina • 37-4-0 (34 KOs)

5. ADRIEN BRONER
82 • U.S. • 31-2-0 (23 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
85 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (9 KOs)

7. MAURICIO HERRERA
44 • U.S. • 22-5-0 (7 KOs)

8. AMIR IMAM
28 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (15 KOs)

9. JOSE BENAVIDEZ
33 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)

10. ANTONIO OROZCO
8 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JORGE LINARES
90 • Venezuela • 40-3-0 (27 KOs)

2. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
33 • Montenegro • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. DENIS SHAFIKOV
33 • Russia • 36-1-1 (19 KOs)

4. SHARIF BOGERE
56 • Uganda • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

5. RICHARD COMMEY
26 • Ghana • 23-0-0 (21 KOs)

6. TERRY FLANAGAN
7 • U.K. • 29-0-0 (12 KOs)

7. ANTHONY CROLLA
5 • U.K. • 30-4-3 (12 KOs)

8. KEVIN MITCHELL
43 • U.K. • 39-3-0 (29 KOs)

9. ARGENIS MENDEZ
7 • Dom. Rep. • 23-3-1 (12 KOs)

10. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
277 • Mexico • 35-5-0 (13 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
308 • Japan • 23-0-1 (19 KOs)

2. FRANCISCO VARGAS
72 • Mexico • 23-0-1 (17 KOs)

3. TAKASHI MIURA
138 • Japan • 29-3-2 (22 KOs)

4. ORLANDO SALIDO
62 • Mexico • 42-13 -3 (29 KOs)

5. ROMAN MARTINEZ
377 • P.R. • 29-2-3 (17 KOs)

6. JAVIER FORTUNA
56 • Dom. Rep. • 29-0-1 (21 KOs)

7. JOSE PEDRAZA
45 • P.R. • 21-0-0 (12 KOs)

8. BRYAN VASQUEZ
50 • Costa Rica • 34-2-0 (18 KOs)

9. RIKKI NAITO
28 • Japan • 13-0-0 (5 KOs)

10. SAUL RODRIGUEZ
1 • U.S. • 19-0-1 (14 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NICHOLAS WALTERS
155 • Jamaica • 26-0-0 (21 KOs)

2. VASYL LOMACHENKO
82 • Ukraine • 5-1-0 (3 KO)

3. GARY RUSSELL JR.
35 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (15 KOs)

4. LEO SANTA CRUZ
13 • U.S. • 31-0-1 (17 KOs)

5. LEE SELBY
89 • U.K. • 22-1-0 (8 KOs)

6. ABNER MARES
134 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (15 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
103 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. EVGENY GRADOVICH
143 • Russia • 20-1-1 (9 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
59 • Argentina • 27-1-0 (21 KOs)

10. RONNY RIOS
1 • U.S. • 25-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
264 • Cuba • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. SCOTT QUIGG
157 • U.K. • 31-0-2 (23 KOs)

2. CARL FRAMPTON
166 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. NONITO DONAIRE
35 • Phil. • 35-3-0 (23 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
89 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. SHINGO WAKE
53 • Japan • 19-4-2 (11 KOs)

6. ALBERT PAGARA
47 • Phil. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

7. REY VARGAS
50 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (20 KOs)

8. JESSIE MAGDALENO
24 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)

9. JULIO CEJA
13 • Mexico • 30-1-0 (27 KOs)

10. MANUEL AVILA
13 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (8 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING'S Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-10 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
212 • Japan • 24-0-2 (17 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
61 • Dom. Rep. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
400 • Panama • 35-4-1 (12 KOs)
4. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
132 • U.K. • 27-2-1 (12 KOs)
5. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
121 • Japan • 31-2-0 (19 KOs)
6. **RANDY CABALLERO**
57 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
7. **LEE HASKINS**
24 • U.K. • 32-3-0 (14 KOs)
8. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
19 • Thailand • 45-6-1 (23 KOs)
9. **PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU**
10 • Thailand • 51-3-0 (35 KOs)
10. **RAU'SHEE WARREN**
6 • U.S. • 13-1-0 (4 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
47 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
185 • Mexico • 33-0-1 (26 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
134 • Thailand • 37-4-1 (34 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
104 • S. Africa • 21-3-0 (18 KOs)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
290 • Argentina • 44-2-2 (23 KOs)
6. **MCJOE ARROYO**
76 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
7. **KOHEI KONO**
6 • Japan • 31-8-1 (13 KOs)
8. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
165 • Thailand • 57-1-1 (22 KOs)
9. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
136 • Phil. • 27-1-0 (14 KOs)
10. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
10 • Panama • 33-4-0 (24 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
107 • Nicaragua • 44-0-0 (38 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
138 • Mexico • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
2. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
81 • Thailand • 16-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
229 • U.S. • 36-5-0 (22 KOs)
4. **KAZUTO IOKA**
62 • Japan • 18-1-0 (10 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
217 • Argentina • 36-2-0 (19 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
89 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **EDGAR SOSA**
185 • Mexico • 51-9-0 (30 KOs)
8. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
64 • P.R. • 16-2-0 (14 KOs)
9. **NAWAPHON POR CHOKCHAI**
22 • Thailand • 31-0-0 (24 KOs)
10. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
7 • Phil. • 21-3-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
216 • Phil. • 37-1-4 (21 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
139 • Mexico • 26-1-1 (17 KOs)
2. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
50 • Japan • 22-2-1 (9 KOs)
3. **JAVIER MENDOZA**
33 • Mexico • 24-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
81 • Phil. • 23-1-1 (18 KOs)
5. **RAUL GARCIA**
47 • Mexico • 36-3-1 (22 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
54 • Phil. • 32-2-0 (12 KOs)
7. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
135 • Peru • 34-9-0 (13 KOs)
8. **REY LORETO**
33 • Phil. • 20-13-0 (12 KOs)
9. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
26 • Mexico • 17-3-1 (11 KOs)
10. **JONATHAN TACONING**
18 • Phil. • 22-2-1 (18 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
166 • S. Africa • 29-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
139 • Japan • 30-7-0 (12 KOs)
3. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
232 • Thailand • 39-0-0 (14 KOs)
4. **KOSEI TANAKA**
56 • Japan • 5-0-0 (2 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
60 • Thailand • 11-0-0 (6 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
163 • Nicaragua • 28-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **CHAO ZHONG XIONG**
54 • China • 26-6-1 (14 KOs)
8. **DENVER CUELLO**
54 • Phil. • 36-5-6 (24 KOs)
9. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
18 • Mexico • 31-6-0 (22 KOs)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
9 • Thailand • 28-4-1 (15 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
77 • Nicaragua • 44-0-0 (38 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
37 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
41 • Kazakhstan • 34-0-0 (31 KOs)
4. **ANDRE WARD**
11 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (15 KOs)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
118 • Cuba • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
277 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)
7. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
30 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
626 • Philippines • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)
9. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
1 • Mexico • 46-1-1 (32 KOs)
10. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
27 • Japan • 24-0-2 (17 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

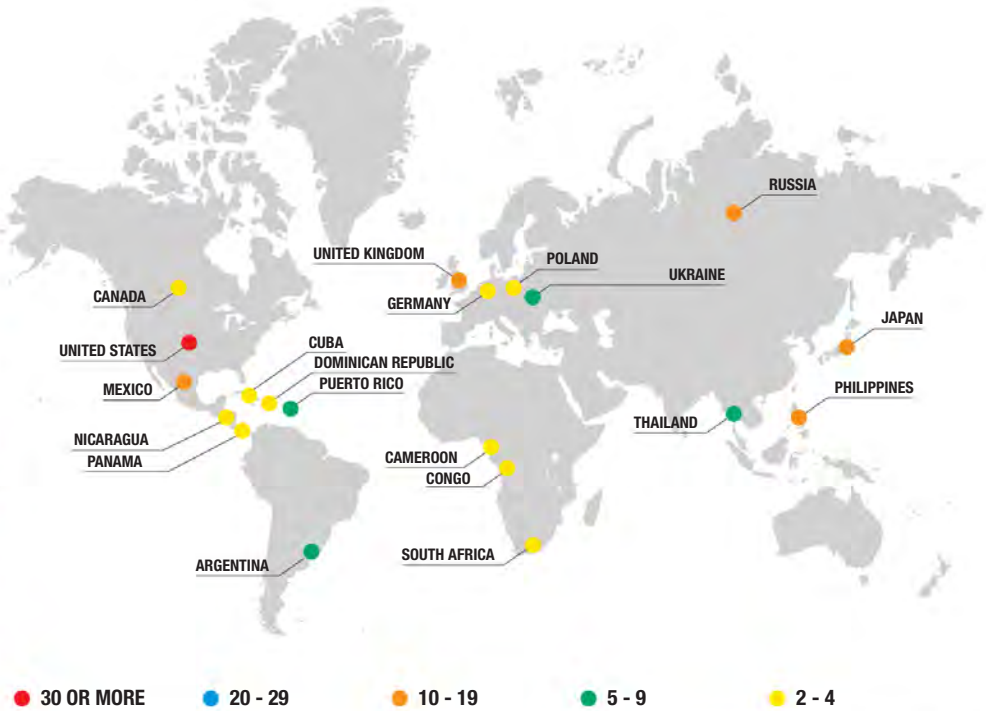
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	35	▲ 2
●	UNITED KINGDOM	19	▲ 3
●	MEXICO	17	▼ 1
●	JAPAN	12	
●	PHILIPPINES	12	
●	RUSSIA	10	▼ 2
●	THAILAND	9	
●	ARGENTINA	6	▲ 1
●	PUERTO RICO	5	▼ 1
●	UKRAINE	5	
●	CANADA	4	▼ 1
●	SOUTH AFRICA	4	▼ 1
●	CUBA	3	▼ 1
●	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	3	
●	GERMANY	3	
●	CAMEROON	2	
●	CONGO	2	
●	NICARAGUA	2	
●	PANAMA	2	
●	POLAND	2	
	ARMENIA	1	
	AUSTRALIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CHINA	1	
	COLOMBIA	1	
	COSTA RICA	1	
	FRANCE	1	▼ 1
	GHANA	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	JAMAICA	1	
	KAZAKHSTAN	1	
	MALAWI	1	
	MONTENEGRO	1	
	PERU	1	
	SWEDEN	1	
	UGANDA	1	
	UZBEKISTAN	1	
	VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *None*

Countries in: *None*



U.K. VS. MEXICO

The U.K. did it. It passed Mexico in the RING Ratings, meaning it now has the second-most rated fighters after the U.S. Mexico led the U.K. in number of rated fighters in the last issue, 18-16. However, in this issue, the U.K. picked up three (heavyweight Anthony Joshua, cruiserweight Ola Afolabi and lightweight Anthony Crolla) while Mexico dropped one (junior bantamweight Felipe Orucuta). Here's a look at the numbers:

DIVISION	U.K.	MEXICO
HEAVYWEIGHTS	2	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	1	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	1
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	1
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	1
WELTERWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	1
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	2
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	1
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	2
BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	1
FLYWEIGHTS	0	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	4
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	1
TOTAL	19	17

KO KINGS

Hall of Famer Archie Moore is generally recognized as holding the record for most knockouts in boxing history, an unfathomable 131. That's 78 more than the current leader, Wladimir Klitschko. Here's a look at the RING-rated fighters with the most KOs.

53 – **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO,** HEAVYWEIGHT

38 – **MANNY PACQUIAO,** WELTERWEIGHT

38 – **ROMAN GONZALEZ,** FLYWEIGHT

35 – **JUERGEN BRAEHMER,** LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

35 – **PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU,** BANTAMWEIGHT

34 – **DEONTAY WILDER,** HEAVYWEIGHT

34 – **LUCAS MATTHYSSE,** JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

34 – **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI,** JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

33 – **MIGUEL COTTO,** JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

32 – **BERNARD HOPKINS,** LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

32 – **CANELO ALVAREZ,** MIDDLEWEIGHT

31 – **GENNADY GOLOVKIN,** MIDDLEWEIGHT

31 – **DAVID LEMIEUX,** MIDDLEWEIGHT

30 – **EDGAR SOSA,** FLYWEIGHT

ISSAC BREKKEN; PACQUIAO: JOHN GURZINSKI

FOCUS ON . . .

LIGHTWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 135-pounders.

Anthony Crolla (left) has only 12 KOs but one came in his biggest fight, his rematch with Darleys Perez (right).

MOST WEEKS RATED: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ **277**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: ANTHONY CROLLA **5**

OLDEST: DEJAN ZLATICANIN **31**

YOUNGEST: TERRY FLANAGAN **26**

MOST FIGHTS: JORGE LINARES **43**

FEWEST FIGHTS: ZLATICANIN **21**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: RICHARD COMMEY, FLANAGAN, ZLATICANIN **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: CROLLA **81.1 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: KEVIN MITCHELL **29**

FEWEST KOS: CROLLA , FLANAGAN, ARGENIS MENDEZ **12**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: FLANAGAN **29 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: CROLLA (WBA), FLANAGAN **(WBO),** LINARES **(WBC)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): ADRIAN ESTRELLA, EMILIANO MARSILI, DARLEYS PEREZ, PETR PETROV, FELIX VERDEJO

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Roman Gonzalez

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

CROLLA: ALEX LIVESEY; GONZALEZ: KEN ISHII

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‘ON TOP OF THE SPORT’

THE DEMANDS OF REACHING THE PINNACLE SHOULD LEAD **CANELO ALVAREZ** TO **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**

By **Ron Borges**

Canelo Alvarez celebrated the biggest victory of his career, a wide decision over Miguel Cotto.

Canelo Alvarez's greatest victory was not yet an hour old and his promoter was already being accosted by a gaggle of voices demanding to know not how Alvarez had defeated Miguel Cotto to win the RING and WBC middleweight titles but whether he was going to duck unified champion Gennady Golovkin. Such is the world Alvarez now lives in.

The 25-year-old Alvarez is the most popular boxer in Mexico and appears to be on his way to becoming equally as popular throughout the boxing world, his clear victory over Cotto at the Mandalay Bay Events Center on Nov. 21 only serving to enhance his position. When that is the case, the thirst to know what's next, even when his hand had just been raised in victory, demands constant quenching.

To get the Cotto fight and a chance at a version of the middleweight title not held by Golovkin, Alvarez had to agree to fight at a catchweight of 155 pounds and to face Golovkin next

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: NAOKI FUKUDA

if he won. Cotto was stripped of his title several days before the fight after refusing to pay a $300,000 sanction fee and an agreed-to $800,000 step-aside fee to Golovkin, who is the WBC's mandatory challenger despite holding the WBA and IBF belts. (Andy Lee is the WBO titleholder.)

Thus, Oscar De La Hoya, Alvarez's promoter, found himself being pressured more than Cotto had been by his fighter on what Alvarez's next step would be even though Alvarez had yet to take a first step out of his locker room to face the post-fight media.

De La Hoya confirmed Alvarez would fight next on Cinco de Mayo weekend next year as well as next Sept. 16 but added it was undetermined whether he would stay at 160 or return to 154 pounds, where he once held the junior middleweight title. The moment those words came out of his mouth, the hordes roared "Golovkin!" and De La Hoya was in a bind.

"I'm not saying he's going to fight someone else (next)," De La Hoya said. "Let him rest. We'll talk about it. Will he fight Triple G? It's not a question. But (Alvarez) is the guy who is on top of the sport now."

The implication was that despite what they had agreed to, Alvarez would do what he pleased, or at least what seemed best for business. His business.

That might be Golovkin, it might be a rematch with Floyd Mayweather Jr. if he can be lured out of retirement or it might be someone else entirely. In boxing, who knows?

Yet fight fans desperately want to see Golovkin in a competitive match with a top-tier opponent, which Alvarez would present. They would like nothing more than to see another division with a unified champion, rather than trying to keep track of

NAOKI FUKUDA

Alvarez did noticeable damage when he got close enough to hit his smaller but elusive opponent.

more belt-wearers than you can find at most men's shops, and they would like nothing better than to see the two best middleweights in the world facing each other in May.

But what Alvarez wants, in the end, will decide the division's short-term future. Alvarez seemed to answer that question when he finally emerged from his dressing room after the fight and said, "I'm not afraid of anybody. I'm not afraid of any fighter. GGG is a great fighter, and he is my friend. I have respect for him but if we do fight it's going to be at my weight class. I'm the champion, I don't have to do what he wants."

That would seem to imply Alvarez might return to 154 pounds or insist Golovkin fight at a catchweight below 160, as Cotto had forced him to do. But a moment later, when asked about how he felt in his first middleweight fight, the newly crowned champion said, "This is my weight class. I made the weight easily and felt solid."

One might hear that and assume he was saying he's a middleweight but he barely was allowed to fight in that division because Cotto had insisted on that catchweight of 155 pounds, only one over the junior middleweight limit. Cotto's thinking was that Alvarez, who was struggling in recent fights to make 154, would be weaker if forced to make 155 rather than if allowed to go to 160. In the end, it made no difference because weight was not the only issue Cotto had to concern himself with.

In boxing, as in most sporting arenas, two things are generally true: Big is better than small and young is better than old. On Nov. 21, Cotto suffered the consequences of both those truisms.

The 35-year-old Cotto was on a three-fight knockout streak but all three wins had come over lesser opponents or a champion in Sergio Martinez who was older and more shopworn than he was. Those victories were real but led to assumptions about him that were false.

Prior to those three fights, Cotto had lost badly two straight times (to

Jay Z (with wife Beyonce), Cotto's promoter, wasn't smiling after the scorecards were read.

REPORT CARD

CANELO ALVAREZ UD 12 MIGUEL COTTO NOV. 21, 2015, MANDALAY BAY, LAS VEGAS

THE MAIN EVENT

B+

Alvarez won convincingly but the fight was competitive and spirited. Wild eighth and 12th rounds brought the crowd to its feet.

ALVAREZ

B+

If winning is the only objective, then Alvarez probably deserves a better grade, but more fire from him would've added more drama.

COTTO

C+

Cotto boxed fairly well and was difficult to hit but he struggled to land clean punches and, when he did, his shots did no damage.

EDDIE REYNOSO

Alvarez's trainer

C+

I don't understand why Alvarez didn't throw more jabs and combinations. His cornermen should've implored him to do so.

FREDDIE ROACH

Cotto's trainer

B

I think Cotto was as prepared as he could be for the fight. He simply didn't have the tools or size to defeat his younger, fresher foe.

THE JUDGES

B-

Dave Moretti's 119-109 (11-1 in rounds) and Burt Clements' 118-110 were too one-sided. John McKaie had the best score: 117-111.

ROBERT BYRD

The referee

A

Byrd faded into the background, which is exactly where a referee is supposed to be. The fight was generally clean.

THE ATMOSPHERE

A

Alvarez's fans were loud and passionate during the fight. They had fun. Cotto had fewer supporters but their voices were heard.

THE UNDERCARD

B

The Takashi Miura-Francisco Vargas brawl was sensational. The Guillermo Rigondeaux-Drian Francisco yawner was a waste of time.

- Michael Rosenthal

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Austin Trout) and looked slow and faded. Which was the real Cotto? That remains a difficult question to answer but the one who lost a unanimous decision to Alvarez was a fighter whose legs deserted him with five rounds to go and never returned, making useless the plan devised for him by his trainer, Freddie Roach.

That plan was to box, box, box, using angles to turn Alvarez and force him to follow Cotto in boxing's dangerous dance rather than to lead. He stayed almost exclusively with a stinging left jab and the right hand and for seven rounds it was an effective strategy. He was frustrating Alvarez with his movement and holding him off with the jab, which was not hurting Alvarez but kept stinging him as if he had a fistful of wasps in his glove.

Then in Round 8, the work Alvarez had been doing, which was landing less frequent but heavier punches, especially to Cotto's hips, achieved its goal. Cotto began to slow down and soon found himself at close quarters and in front of Alvarez, two places he knew were not his most advantageous battlegrounds. He lost every one of those battles and when he came back out for Round 9 it was clear he'd also lost the war.

Cotto's jab was now gone and his legs were no longer cooperating. He was still trying to move but those movements no longer allowed him to escape as easily as he had earlier. More and more Alvarez's heavier punches were landing solidly, now seldom blunted by a jab that in the early rounds often stopped him before he could arrive at the punching distance he wanted.

Now he'd found it and it was youth as much as skill that got him there. He was clearly the bigger and stronger of the two but he was also the fresher. At 25, he had not yet paid the price boxing extracts from all its warriors, one that over time steals, little by little, the great gifts that had once lifted Cotto to an exalted position among the best fighters in the world.

That was then but on this night the younger man's punches carried with them a far higher price than did Cotto's. His landed with a bang, Cotto's with a bing. It was the difference between being in a fender bender and a head-on collision.

"From the opening round I felt I was stronger than him," Alvarez (46-1-1, 32 knockouts) said after a one-sided, unanimous decision in his favor was announced. "I felt I had the advantage and I was going to win the fight."

Alvarez shows off his new RING and WBC championship belts.

Even Cotto's corner seems to have been aware of that advantage when preparing for the fight.

"Our plan was out outbox him, out-jab him," said Roach after Cotto refused to speak following the fight beyond saying "Wow!" when the scorecards were read. One of the judges, veteran Dave Moretti, scored it 119-109, meaning he gave all but one round to Alvarez. "Wow!" seemed an appropriate response. Only someone in need of a vision exam could have come to that conclusion but regardless, Alvarez clearly won by a comfortable margin in part because Roach's plan dissolved as Cotto's legs stiffened.

"I wanted him to use angles a lot more," Roach said. "A couple of times he stood in front of him. Those weren't his best rounds."

Still, Roach loyally insisted Cotto (40-5, 33 KOs) had done enough to win, admitting it was a competitive fight but adding, "I thought we had the edge at the end but it went the other way. Nobody in our corner was concerned. We felt we outscored Canelo. That's life."

So are demands to know what Alvarez will do next shortly after the greatest victory of his career. Alvarez seemed unsure of whether that would lead him to Golovkin or elsewhere but one thing was certain: Miguel Cotto, who lost not only to Alvarez but also to the calendar, was no longer in them.

Youth is not always triumphant in boxing but it is a difficult opponent to overcome for someone like Cotto, who at 35 had been a willing participant in a number of wars during his career. Each takes from a fighter a small piece that is left behind in that arena. It is the price the boxer pays and eventually it adds up. For Cotto, the bill came due in the final five rounds against Alvarez.

Now Alvarez's promoter says he's "on top of the sport." It is a place where the air is thin and the demands are high. Little time is allowed at that pinnacle to savor victory before the insatiable public wants to know when you will face the next lion. That lion is Golovkin and if Canelo Alvarez wants to stay in that exalted spot for long, he must soon face him as he promised to do.

To do anything else will nudge him from that spot just as fast as he ascended to it. It is another price the great boxer must pay. The price for success.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

AT A LOSS

MIGUEL COTTO HAD LITTLE TO SAY AFTER HIS LOSS TO **CANELO ALVAREZ.** NOW WE WAIT TO HEAR WHAT HE AND HIS HANDLERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Miguel Cotto thought he did enough to win a decision over Canelo Alvarez.

JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: ISAAC BREKKEN

Miguel Cotto, always a man with more punches than words, had only one thing to say the last time he stepped out of the ring.

"Wow."

Short and simple, yet a three-letter word that begs for more. There wasn't, of course. Cotto said nothing to HBO's Max Kellerman and didn't appear at the post-fight news conference at Las Vegas' Mandalay Bay on a late Saturday before Thanksgiving.

"Wow" obviously was his reaction to an outcome that was difficult for him to accept: *Wow, that was a lousy decision.*

The exclamation could've applied to a variety of issues on a night he might want to forget, though. Such as …

Wow, when I heard the 117-111, 119-109, 118-110 scores, I thought my ear drums had been busted by the bomb-like booms that sent the customers ducking under seats and tables for cover during a concert before opening bell.

Or: *Wow, Alvarez hits hard.*

Or: *Wow, I was just too bleeping small. I'll fight again but next time it'll be against somebody my size.*

Or: *Wow, I'm 35 but I feel like 60.*

Or: *Wow, I'm done, I'm retiring.*

Pick one, pick them all.

In his swift exodus from the ring, Cotto's bruised body language bore the look of confusion about what's next. Who's next?

When he got home to Puerto Rico a couple of days after the unanimous decision was announced, he told media that he thought he won eight of the 12 rounds. He should have won a 116-112 decision, he said.

There's been plenty of debate about the margin on the cards, although there's not been much disagreement about the result.

"Canelo clearly won," Alvarez promoter Oscar De La Hoya said. "That's a fact. But you can make a strong argument that the score margins were too much."

Make enough of an argument

JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

and perhaps there are grounds for a rematch.

"We would be open to it, absolutely," said De La Hoya, who was confident that the bout – another chapter in the rich history of the Puerto Rico-Mexico rivalry – would do a big pay-per-view number. "Whatever happens, Cotto has no reason to hang his head. He's got a lot left in the tank. He can still go up against just about anybody."

Each fighter's contract includes an option for a rematch, according to sources with Golden Boy and Roc Nation, Cotto's promoter.

But Alvarez-Cotto II in May or September of 2016 seems unlikely, mostly because the 25-year-old Canelo isn't going to get any smaller. Canelo was at the agreed-upon catchweight, 155 pounds, on the day before the bout. Neither fighter agreed to step on an HBO scale before opening bell. The guesstimate was that Canelo was between 170 and 175 pounds.

Cotto, who weighed in at 153.5, was a pound or two under 160 when he stepped into the ring, according to Freddie Roach, his trainer.

During the next couple of years, Canelo is only going to grow into a full-fledged middleweight. A showdown looms with Gennady Golovkin, who is the mandatory challenger for a WBC title Canelo won a few days after it was stripped from Cotto.

Cotto, a former champion at four weights (140, 147, 154 and 160), refused to pay the $300,000 sanctioning fee, which appeared to be his way of saying he was done as a middleweight. On the scale, Cotto never was a middleweight anyway.

The historic division's lineal champion won the RING and WBC versions of the title against a hobbled Sergio Martinez, who had undergone knee surgery before losing to Cotto

Cotto had difficulty hitting Alvarez cleanly, one reason he came up short on the scorecards.

in June 2014 at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Cotto's reign as a middleweight was always something of an illusion. In the wake of his loss to Canelo, the suggestion was that he was headed back down the scale and back to a division where he is still a real threat.

"I think he has a couple of fights left in him, maybe in a rematch," Roach said. "We'll see. Going back to 154 pounds is definitely an option we will pursue. Going into the fight, Miguel was about 159 pounds and his opponent was probably 175. We did have trouble backing him up."

A few days before facing Canelo, Cotto met with a handful of writers in a conference room at Mandalay Bay and had more to say than just "wow." He talked about his future and how many more bouts he envisioned after Canelo, his 45th in a pro career (40-5, 33 knockouts) that started in 2001.

"Not too many," Cotto said with a rare smile. "Probably one more and we're done."

Money would seem to dictate at least one more. If he retires after the loss to Alvarez, he would leave a lot on the table.

Last March, Cotto, who was ranked No. 75 on Forbes' 2012 list of the world's highest-earning athletes with $19 million, signed a three-fight deal with Jay Z's Roc Nation for a reported $50 million.

In addition to a $5 million signing bonus, he was expected to get about $15 million per fight, the amount he received for fighting Alvarez – his second fight for Roc Nation – according to a contract filed with the Nevada State Athletic Commission. In the first bout of the deal, he stopped Daniel Geale in June at Madison Square Garden.

The third bout would probably bring him back to New York, where the popular Puerto Rican, the best since Felix Trinidad, could fight for the last time in front of his most loyal fans.

But against whom?

Floyd Mayweather Jr. mentioned Cotto in an interview with

UNFRIENDLY CONFINES

Miguel Cotto will one day be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame but that will have little to do with what he did in Las Vegas. He started 8-0 in Sin City but is only 1-4 since, losing to every top-level opponent he faced there. Here is a look at his last five fights in Vegas.

CANELO ALVAREZ

Date: Nov. 21, 2015
Result: Loss (UD)
Summary: Cotto acquitted himself reasonably well but had difficulty landing cleanly and took hard shots himself, which resulted in a one-sided decision. He lost the RING and WBC (for refusing to pay fees) middleweight titles.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

Date: May 5, 2012
Result: Loss (UD)
Summary: Cotto performed surprisingly well – certainly better than most Mayweather opponents – but still ended up far behind on the scorecards. He seemed to prove he had quite a bit left at 31 in this fight.

RICARDO MAYORGA

Date: March 12, 2011
Result: Win (TKO 12)
Summary: Mayorga was the only opponent among his last five in Las Vegas who was not highly regarded at the time. Thus, the result wasn't surprising. Cotto was defending his 154-pound title.

MANNY PACQUIAO

Date: Nov. 14, 2009
Result: Loss (TKO 12)
Summary: Cotto felt Pacquiao's power fairly early – going down in Rounds 3 and 4 – and fought going backward thereafter. Cotto was taking shots and not punching back when referee Kenny Bayless stopped it.

ANTONIO MARGARITO

Date: July 26, 2008
Result: Loss (TKO 11)
Summary: This was the most brutal loss of Cotto's career. He did well early but was worn down and ultimately took a beating. He went down twice in the final round, prompting his corner to throw in the towel.

Note: These are Cotto's victories in his first eight fights in Las Vegas (most recent first): Randall Bailey (TKO 6), Lovemore N'Dou (UD 12), Victoriano Sosa (TKO 4), Demetrio Ceballos (TKO 7), Cesar Bazan (TKO 11), John Brown (UD 10), Justin Juuko (TKO 5) and Juan Angel Macias (TKO 7).

FightHype.com, Mayweather's go-to website, following the Alvarez-Cotto fight. He ripped the one-sided scoring but not the result. He also ripped Roach, who has been in Cotto's corner for four straight fights – three victories and the Alvarez loss.

Ripping the scorecards was no surprise. Mayweather suggested a Canelo-Golden Boy bias. Despite a 2013 victory over Alvarez that even the loser says embarrassed him, Mayweather pointed out that he won a majority decision because one judge somehow scored it a draw.

It would have been a shock if he had not ripped Roach, who as Manny Pacquiao's trainer has always been a target for Mayweather and his own trainer, Floyd Sr.

But the timing of the criticism in the immediate wake of Alvarez-Cotto suggests that the retired Mayweather is doing more than just thinking about his next Bugati.

He beat Cotto in a competitive 12-round decision in 2012. Facing Cotto in a junior middleweight rematch might be a way to sell his comeback, perhaps this spring at the opening of a new Las Vegas Arena, which has already become part of The Strip's skyline.

Alvarez has said he would like a Mayweather rematch. But Mayweather saw what Cotto endured against the maturing Mexican. He's getting bigger and smarter, both of which add up to a real threat of derailing any hope Mayweather might have at going 50-0, the fundamental plank in his TBE (The Best Ever) claim.

The smaller and older Cotto is a much safer bet. He's also a name and a proven draw, both of which Mayweather would need if he hopes to get the $32 million minimum he enjoyed through his six-fight deal with Showtime.

If Cotto fights only once more, however, there are questions about whether he'd be willing to do it anywhere other than New York. He has had a tough time in Vegas, where he suffered four of his five losses – Antonio Margarito (2008), Pacquiao (2011), Mayweather and Alvarez.

Before the Alvarez loss, Roach foresaw more than just one fight in Cotto's future.

"He has about three left in him," said Roach, who added that he wanted Cotto to "call out" Mayweather.

Cotto said his prayers before the opening bell.

If Mayweather doesn't make the comeback that just about everybody expects and Cotto decides on only one more, then what? More to the point: Who?

For $15 million, it's safe to assume that Roc Nation will want a known quantity, a good draw. Some of the young lions at welterweight – Kell Brook, Keith Thurman and Shawn Porter – are interesting. But they're all a few victories away from being reliable box-office commodities. They're also young and very dangerous – both reasons for Cotto to retire now.

A Pacquiao rematch is off the board. He and Cotto are friends. Both might be just one fight from retirement. Also, Roach trains both. There are too many reasons for that one not to happen.

Then, there's Amir Khan. Put him in the "maybe" category. Khan has kept himself in the headlines, mostly for trying to talk his way into being Mayweather's B-side once, then twice. Khan whiffed both times.

Khan also has tried to talk his way into getting a shot at Pacquiao in an April bout that the Filipino Congressman has said will be his last. Khan, a competent boxer with a vulnerable chin, is an interesting possibility who also brings U.K. fans and media with him.

In the weeks before and after Alvarez-Cotto, however, there was more talk about Pacquiao facing emerging star Terence Crawford or Tim Bradley in a second rematch.

Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum has said his fighter will decide. If Pacquiao's choice is Crawford or Khan, that leaves an intriguing possibility for Cotto in Bradley, who won the WBO welterweight title in a Nov. 7 stoppage of shopworn Brandon Rios. In the immediate aftermath of Cotto's loss, Bradley's name was mentioned in part because Roach said that he doesn't like Bradley's new trainer, Teddy Atlas, who these days is known for his television commentary as much as corner work.

Cotto-Bradley at a catchweight – say 150 to 152 pounds – might attract media attention on a Roach-Atlas rivalry and create a buzz among fans interested in two skilled fighters late in their careers, yet both with experience on the game's biggest stage. They are about the same size, too.

That might generate a "wow" nobody has to explain.

RIGHT: ISAAC BREKKEN/GETTY IMAGES; AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

GGG ON THE RISE

GENNADY GOLOVKIN CONTINUES TO BUILD HIS NAME AS A SHOWDOWN WITH CANELO ALVAREZ LOOMS

By **Steve Kim**

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

The moment Canelo Alvarez's hand was raised after he outpointed Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas on Nov. 21, talk in the boxing world turned to a third fighter: Gennady Golovkin.

There were other subjects for fans to buzz about after the fight, such as the wideness of the official scorecards (some thought the bout was closer) or the WBC's decision to strip Cotto of his title just days before the pay-per-view event, but the prospect of Alvarez facing "GGG" was the main focus of hardcore aficionados.

Their impatience is an indication of the sport's need to rekindle big-fight excitement in the aftermath of the disappointing Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao event and to find the next pay-per-view attraction as the careers of the two future Hall of Famers come to a close.

If Golovkin gets his wish, fans will see him fight Alvarez sooner rather than later. The undefeated WBA and IBF middleweight titleholder also holds the WBC "interim" belt. That makes him the mandatory challenger for Alvarez, who earned the WBC strap along with the RING title on Nov. 21.

Alvarez was bold but also somewhat evasive when asked about the possibility of the matchup next year.

"I'm not afraid of any fighter," he said. "(Golovkin) is a great fighter and he is my friend. I have respect for him but if we do fight, it's going to be at my weight class. I'm the champion. I don't have to do what he wants." (And by his weight class, Alvarez is referring to the catchweight of 155 pounds at which he fought Cotto.)

It's unlikely that Alvarez will comply with the WBC edict that requires him to face Golovkin next but the showdown could happen before the end of 2016. Alvarez is one of the few active fighters who transcends a title and in many respects, as he alluded to in his post-fight comments, he can basically make up some of his own rules as he goes along. There's no question that Golovkin and his promoter, K2 Promotions, would eagerly make this matchup. When asked about a showdown with Alvarez a few days before the 25-year-old downed Cotto, Golovkin stated, "I think he's a warrior, he's ready.

"Maybe Golden Boy (Promotions) is not ready for the big fight, but I think a fight with me and Canelo is the next big fight in the world."

Should this come to reality, it would provide further proof that the sport of boxing is moving forward.

For nearly a decade Mayweather and Pacquiao have been boxing's two biggest pay-per-view franchises, as well as the symbolic figures of the sport. Their disappointingly uneventful fight last May, after five seemingly interminable years of fruitless negotiating, represented a turning of the page of sorts to most boxing fans. Mayweather and Pacquiao have meant much to the game but fans and the boxing industry realize it's time to move on to the next generation.

Many observers believe that, alongside Alvarez, it's Golovkin who could be the one to lead boxing into the future.

Since making his U.S. (and HBO) debut in September 2012 with a fifth-round stoppage of Grzegorz Proksa,

Gennady Golovkin rose another notch in the public opinion arena with his knockout of David Lemieux.

the native of Kazakhstan has cut a brutal path through the 160-pound division. Golovkin (34-0, 31 knockouts) has fought 10 times (seven times on HBO), scored 10 knockouts (driving his streak to 21 consecutive stoppages), and headlined his first pay-per-view event (against David Lemieux last October). Along the way, he has climbed the media's pound-for-pound lists (reaching No. 3 in THE RING's mythical rankings), garnered strong TV ratings, fought in front of packed arenas and sparked a rapidly growing fan base in the U.S. that includes a large Mexican/Mexican-American contingent. He has also looked darn-near invincible in the ring.

The only tangible drawback is that Golovkin is 33, which doesn't make him a relic by today's standards but it certainly doesn't make him young, either. However, the 2004 Olympic silver medalist believes he is a long way from finished. He says he has "five to seven years more" in the sport.

"I spend a lot of time with Gennady and his family when they're here in Los Angeles and I see how he is when he's not in training camp," said Tom Loeffler, the managing director of K2 and mastermind of Golovkin's rapid rise in the sport. "He barely gains eight pounds over his fighting weight. He always stays fit, he always stays healthy. He doesn't have any bad habits. He's not throwing around money at strip clubs or anything like that.

"So age is really just a physical number but Gennady and Abel (Sanchez, his trainer) have actually said that we haven't seen the best Gennady yet."

The question is will the prime of GGG expire before he gets to face one or more of the marquee names in the sport or achieve his other prime objective – collecting all the major 160-pound titles.

He unified the WBA and IBF belts by stopping Lemieux last October

AL BELLO

Golovkin reduced a solid fighter in Lemieux to a punching bag.

LEMIEUX NO TEST FOR GGG

Gennady Golovkin turned a potential action bout into a rout on Oct. 17 at a sold-out Madison Square Garden.

Almost everyone thought Triple-G would beat David Lemieux, a huge banger with limited skills, but the hope was that at the very least the French-Canadian would go down in a thrilling hail of wild punches.

Didn't happen.

Lemieux could barely touch Golovkin, who set up everything with his jab and followed with more and more punishing power shots as the fight went on. And when Lemieux (34-3, 31 knockouts) did manage to land, his punches accomplished nothing more than to inspire Golovkin (34-0, 31 KOs) to finish the job.

He did so 1 minute, 32 seconds into the eighth round, when referee Steve Willis decided a battered and helpless Lemieux had taken enough of a beating.

Sadly for those who expected a competitive fight: Golovkin won every round on all three cards before the stoppage, crystal clear evidence that this was anything but a competitive boxing match.

The victory added the IBF middleweight belt to the WBA titleholder's collection and, combined with Canelo Alvarez's victory over Miguel Cotto on Nov. 21, set up a showdown with the RING and WBC champion for late 2016 or 2017.

The win ran Golovkin's knockout streak to a remarkable 21, which goes back to 2008.

His next victim could be Tureano Johnson, another limited fighter who outpointed Eamonn O'Kane on the card in New York City to become the mandatory challenger to the IBF title.

Then Alvarez?

— Michael Rosenthal

but he wants the WBO, WBC and RING titles as well. Like Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Bernard Hopkins, Golovkin wants to be the undisputed champ.

"The people who say the titles aren't important are the people who don't want to unify them," said Loeffler.

The Lemieux fight was a bit of a risky proposition given that Golovkin had no track record in the pay-per-view market and Lemieux wasn't the most well-known dance partner. K2 officials understood the chance they were taking in this venture. According to various sources, they did between 100,000-150,000 buys. Some believe that represented a failure.

Loeffler counters: "Gennady has given me orders that he wants to unify the middleweight division, all the titles, and before we couldn't get any of the champions in the ring. That's why we have to give David Lemieux and Golden Boy a lot of credit for agreeing to get in the ring. And while people are focused on the pay-per-view numbers, that's what we had originally projected when we made the deal with Lemieux and Golden Boy."

It's believed that to entice Lemieux to get into the ring with Golovkin, the fight had to go on pay-per-view to generate a bigger payday for the Canadian than what was available in the HBO budget.

Loeffler said money's not the point at this seed-planting stage of Golovkin's career. "Gennady doesn't tell me, 'Tom, I need this much money to fight this guy,'" he said. "That's never the conversation. The conversation is that he wants to face the best guy and he wants to prove he's the best in the middleweight division."

Mark Taffet, HBO's longtime pay-per-view guru, said that Golovkin-Lemieux performed in the expected range but pointed out that all pay-per-view franchises need to be built and developed.

"If you look at the biggest pay-per-view stars of the recent era, Mayweather and Pacquiao, they each

WHAT MAKES GGG SO GOOD?

ABEL SANCHEZ, HIS TRAINER, GIVES YOU FIVE THINGS THAT SET GOLOVKIN APART By Bernard Fernandez

Gennady Gennadyevich Golovkin might be the most devastating puncher to have graced the middleweight division since former WBC champion Gerald McClellan stopped 29 of his 34 opponents in the 1990s, frequently by knockouts so emphatic they merited multiple exclamation points.

"GGG" has knocked out 31 of his first 34 opponents, including the last 21. That's a stat that catches the eye.

But to appreciate Golovkin exclusively for his incredible power is to miss some of the more subtle characteristics that make the 33-year-old Kazakhstani so much more than just another one-dimensional big bopper.

Abel Sanchez (pictured) has trained 15 world champions but in the relative serenity of his Summit Boxing Trainer Center in Big Bear Lake, California, two hours north of Los Angeles and nearly 8,000 feet above sea level, he sees qualities in the 160-pound titleholder that only are apparent to those who are around him on an extended basis.

Sanchez – who began working with Golovkin in 2010, when he was 18-0 but still something of an unfinished product – was gracious enough to list five things that make Golovkin so dominating.

HIGH STANDARDS

"I would say the first is his desire to be the best that he can be. He's willing to sacrifice by being away from his family, to be in camp for extended periods of time. His discipline is unbelievable."

AMATEUR EXPERIENCE

"His extensive amateur foundation (Golovkin was 345-5, taking gold at the 2003 World Championships and silver at the 2004 Olympics) made it easy to layer things on top of that. He's such an intelligent person in the ring that once you teach him something, it sticks and helps make him even better."

MENTORING OTHERS

"You have to love his willingness to help the kids in the gym. I think that takes his mind off the pressures he has on himself as one of the best fighters in the world. Mentoring the kids, I have no doubt he's going to be a good coach when he retires, if he chooses to do that."

HIS LOYALTY

"Getting to know him over these past 5½ years, his loyalty not only to me but the same people that I met who were with him then, is something you don't always see in fighters."

THAT POWER

"Fifth – and this is something that probably should be right at the top – are those God-given heavy hands. But even so, he has made himself better in that respect by improving his technique, his timing, his balance. His ring intelligence enables him to set his man up. I've never worked with a fighter, in any weight class, as heavy-handed as Gennady Golovkin. But you know what? He is Gennady Golovkin, just a wonderful human being outside the ring, and 'GGG' in the ring. Every night when I hit my knees I thank the Lord for letting this man come into my life." •

generated about 300,000 buys in their first pay-per-view (main events), although I have to say that they fought fighters who had more general awareness and recognition than David Lemieux.

"Floyd fought Arturo Gatti, who had probably two dozen fights on HBO and was a legend in his own right. In fact, I think the fight was called 'Gatti-Mayweather,'" recalled Taffet, who pointed out that Pacquiao's initial pay-per-view headliner came against Erik Morales, "a fighter with deep Mexican roots, a recognized fighter with a huge fan-base. ... So when you put those factors together, I think 150,000 buys for Gennady's fight was expected. It was reasonable and provided a great launching pad for the future."

Golovkin still has work to do to become a pay-per-view franchise but he is clearly one of the biggest ticket-sellers in the sport. He has demonstrated the rare ability to play to full houses in both the Los Angeles area and New York City. Even though he doesn't have the pure achievements of Sergey Kovalev, it's Golovkin who packs venues such as StubHub Center and the Forum in Southern California. The Lemieux fight had a paid attendance of more than 20,000.

Kovalev, whose career is also on an impressive arc, has struggled to sell tickets thus far and his most well-attended events have come with him as the road fighter.

"Gennady's the only non-Puerto Rican to sell out every ticket at Madison Square Garden (in recent years), one of the toughest venues as far as selling everything out, every ticket," Loeffler said. "Cotto could do it and the great Felix Trinidad could do it. And you have Gennady in just his fourth time there. Gennady's from Kazakhstan. He didn't grow up over here, he wasn't local in New York and he fought David Lemieux from Canada and that event sold every ticket."

According to Loeffler, the Lemieux fight aired in over 120 countries across the world and it was reported that the Garden set sales records for Golovkin-Lemieux merchandise.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Donald Trump caused a stir when he showed up at Madison Square Garden.

"It was very quick because I was not very popular," said Golovkin of his ascension in the public eye. "I'm very surprised, I'm enjoying it. ... I love boxing and I'm thankful to fans. Fans understand boxing, that it's a true life, and I bring a new idea. I respect the fans."

Hardcore fans respect him back. Casual fans are discovering him thanks to media exposure beyond the ring.

Leading into the Lemieux fight, Golovkin's ad campaign with Apple began. His commercial for the Apple Watch aired in such prime slots as Monday Night Football on ESPN and "The Big Bang Theory" on CBS.

"A lot of people loved it," Golovkin said of the reaction to his role as a pitchman. "I have negatives because sometimes people say, 'Why you? It's too much for you.' But my respect to Apple. It's very good for the sport, not just for me but for boxing. It's a lot of respect. It's the biggest technology company in the world. Now I work with Apple. It's an amazing time."

It's uncommon nowadays that a boxer gets major endorsement deals. But more may be coming down the line for Golovkin, including the Jordan brand, according to Loeffler.

The brand-building of Golovkin continues geographically as well. On the first weekend of last November he made his first ever trip to Texas. Golovkin was a guest of Jerry Jones and the Dallas Cowboys as they hosted the Philadelphia Eagles that Sunday night. The following day Golovkin made the rounds with the media in both Dallas and San Antonio. He was mobbed at the Mi Tierra eatery by a few hundred fans who wanted autographs and photos with him. There's no doubt that the Lone Star State is their next frontier.

"The reception we got in Texas was amazing, at Cowboys Stadium at the game and then San Antonio. You can tell the fans are excited to see Gennady. So (a fight in Texas) would definitely be on the wish list for next year," said Loeffler, who accompanied Golovkin on the trip, along with Sanchez.

What better place to host a possible Alvarez-Golovkin fight next year – should it come to fruition – than "Jerry's World"? In 2010, this venue, now officially named AT&T Stadium, hosted two Pacquiao events that drew a combined 90,000 fans. Judging by Alvarez's track record of selling tickets in Texas, where he drew throngs against Austin Trout at the Alamodome in San Antonio and more recently against James Kirkland at the Minute Maid Park in Houston, combined with Golovkin's history of being a live attraction, this seems to be a can't-miss proposition.

"There's no question that would be at one of the biggest venues in the state," Loeffler said. "Canelo likes to fight in Texas and the great thing about Gennady is he doesn't care who he fights or where he fights and so with Jerry Jones showing interest in Gennady fighting there, there wouldn't be a bigger fight in the sport of boxing.

"A lot of things would have to happen and come to fruition but there wouldn't be a better date than Cinco De Mayo weekend 2016." RING

ANOTHER LEGEND FALLS

RONDA ROUSEY FELL VICTIM NOT ONLY TO **HOLLY HOLM** BUT ALSO THE HYPE THAT DEEMED HER INVINCIBLE

By **Thomas Hauser**

Sports, unlike most forms of entertainment, have no script. Sometimes the narrative unfolds as expected. Sometimes it doesn't. Once the competition begins, what an athlete has done in the past isn't outcome determinative. Athletes have to prove themselves anew every time.

Ronda Rousey, age 28, was at the apex of mixed martial arts. Sports Illustrated called her the most dominant athlete in the world today. She'd been on the cover of magazines running the gamut from Maxim to THE RING and verbally outsparred Floyd Mayweather. People piled their expectations onto her shoulders.

Rousey's arm bar was the equivalent of Mike Tyson's one-punch knockout power. Iron Mike devastated his opponents. Always. Until the night he didn't.

Tyson was invincible before Buster Douglas. The invincible Sonny Liston was stopped by Cassius Clay. The unbeatable Joe Louis was knocked out in his first encounter with Max Schmeling.

On the afternoon of Nov. 14 in Melbourne, Rousey was knocked out in the second round by Holly Holm. Once again, combat sports experienced the shock of a seemingly invincible fighter losing.

It happens.

Holm, age 34, turned to professional boxing in 2002 after an early stint as a kickboxer and compiled a 33-2-3 record in the sweet science. During that time, she scored only nine knockouts, which speaks to a lack of punching power. But "power" is a relative term when talking about professional boxers.

No one expected Ronda Rousey to end up in this position.

In 2011, Holm suffered a brutal beating in a seventh-round knockout loss to Anne Sophie Mathis. She figured out what she did wrong and, in a rematch six months later, won a clear-cut unanimous decision. Holm is a fighter.

Rousey-Holm was fought on Holm's terms. She controlled the distance between Rousey and herself with deft footwork and a stiff jab. That and her southpaw stance enabled her to strike effectively when the combatants were on their feet. And she knew enough MMA to blunt Rousey's counter-maneuvers.

Holm also seemed physically stronger that Rousey; if not at the start of the match, then certainly once Rousey had taken some jabs to the face. As the match progressed, Rousey was reduced to following

PAUL CROCK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Holm ineffectively around the ring and walking into more jabs. Holm made Rousey look like an amateur.

Two minutes, 10 seconds into the fight, Holm scored big with a move that's illegal in boxing. With both fighters in striking position, Holm threw what appeared to be a straight left that fell short by design so her elbow landed flush on Rousey's mouth. It might have been the most damaging blow that Rousey has been hit with in her life. The elbow split her lip. She wobbled, held on and managed to drag Holm to the canvas. Holm escaped.

Fifty-two seconds into the second round, a straight left deposited Rousey on the canvas. She jumped to her feet and Holm measured her for a left leg kick that landed flush on the neck. That put Rousey down for good, on the verge of unconsciousness and defenseless. Holm jumped on her, landed two more punches to the face and the referee stopped it.

A dazed Rousey needed help getting to her feet and was taken to the hospital for observation. She got beaten up.

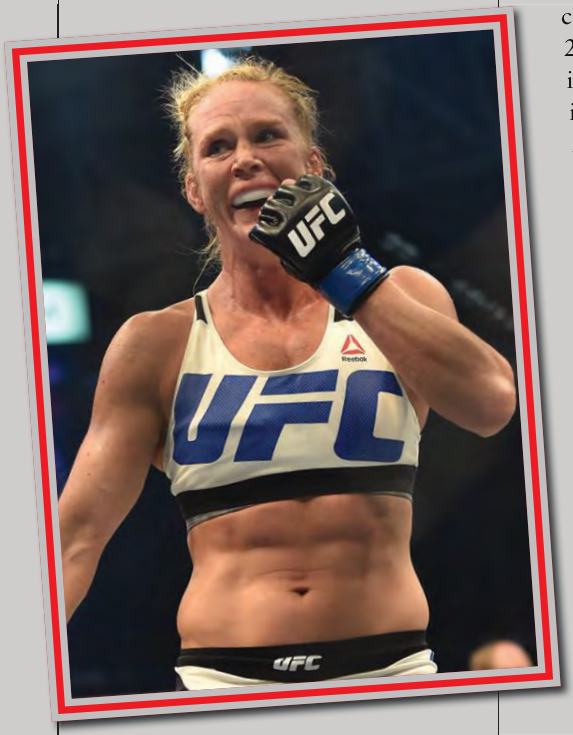
How did it happen?

For starters, Rousey's body looked a bit soft when she entered the ring and she seemed exhausted at the end of the first round. Fighting is a full-time job. It's possible that Rousey's preparation for the fight was hampered by too many outside interests. During the past year, she has modeled, acted in movies and lived the celebrity life interspersed with the seemingly never-ending drama of her personal relationships with her boyfriend of the moment and her mother.

Muhammad Ali thrived on chaos. But for most athletes, multiple distractions hinder training and cause them to lose focus. It's an old story. The popular champion gets a bit lazy in the gym and cuts a few corners. The old intensity isn't quite there.

Also, one of the biggest mistakes a fighter can make is to buy into the myth of his, or her, own invincibility. Rousey seemed to have become a believer.

When Tyson comes to the gym and tells you what a good boxer you are and Oscar De La Hoya wants to promote your boxing career, and you're on the cover of THE RING, it's easy to lose sight of reality with regard to the true level of your boxing skills. You start to believe what people are telling you, especially if the boxers you're sparring with aren't well-trained in the art of hurting and aren't trying to hurt you.



Holly Holm had the perfect game plan and executed it flawlessly.

On top of that, Rousey had a lousy game plan for Holm and fought badly, while Holm had a good game plan and fought well. In the past, Rousey succeeded by bum-rushing opponents, getting them on the canvas quickly and ending matters with her arm bar. Here, because Holm was able to master the distance between them and jab effectively, the bum-rush didn't work.

Rousey-Holm shouldn't be taken as an indication that boxers are superior fighters to mixed martial artists. An elite boxer spends years developing what is essentially one fighting technique and develops that technique better than any single technique in a mixed martial artist's arsenal. By contrast, a mixed martial artist is like a decathlete who masters multiple disciplines while not necessarily being world-class level in any of them.

Rousey started in MMA as an amateur in 2010 after a successful career in judo. She turned pro in 2011. Holm began kickboxing in her teens and took up MMA in 2011. Significantly, the two most damaging blows that Holm delivered during the fight – an elbow to the face in the first round and the finishing leg kick in Round 2 – were MMA moves.

As for what comes next … fighters lose. The question now is how will Rousey react to the loss? Will she come back strong as Louis and Ali did after their first defeat? Or will she be forever diminished as a fighter, as happened with Tyson after his loss to Douglas?

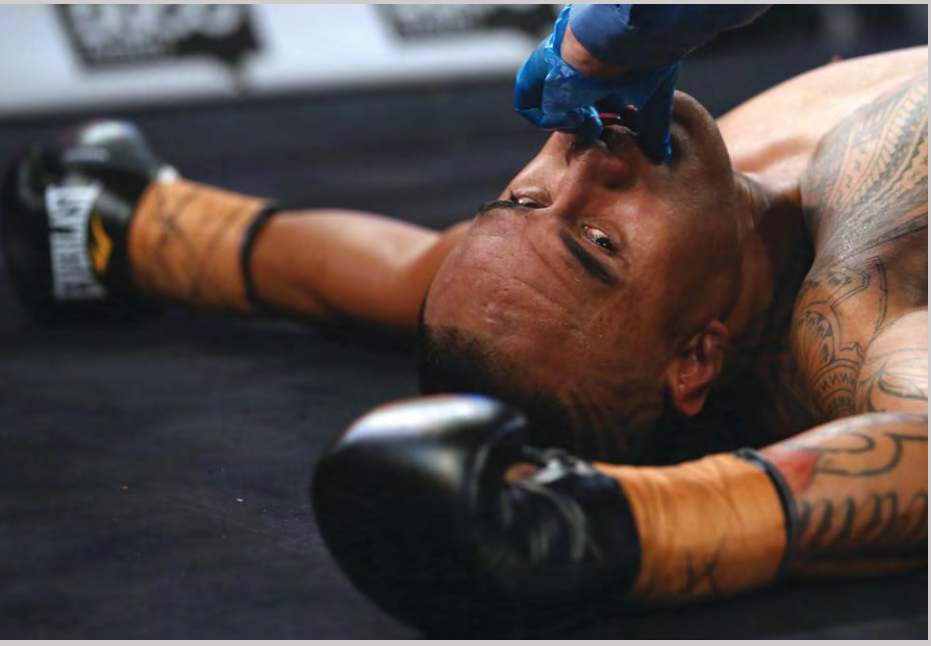
A rematch between Rousey and Holm would be the most lucrative event in MMA history. The plan immediately after the fight was for it to be contested in Las Vegas at UFC 200 in July 2016.

What will be different the next time around? Rousey can't beat Holm on her feet. The notion that Rousey had somehow become a world-class boxer in addition to her grappling skills was never realistic. In a rematch, she will have to find a way to take the fight to the ground.

Meanwhile, UFC's biggest star has been defeated. But beating "The Woman" doesn't make Holm "The Woman." Like their first encounter, Rousey-Holm II will be largely about Rousey. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hurting Sport" – has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

AN IDEA WITH TEETH?



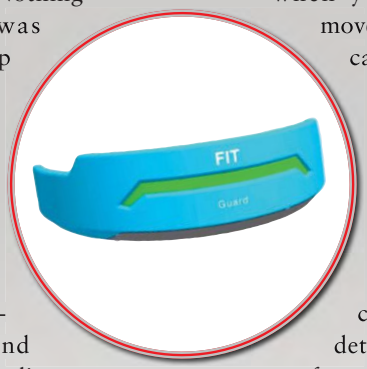
Sensors within the FitGuard can provide useful information.

NEW MOUTHGUARD PROVIDES DATA THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL IN THE BATTLE AGAINST CONCUSSIONS By **Brian Harty**

Anthony Gonzalez knew he'd been hit hard on the back of his head during a rugby game at Arizona State University in 2011. Nothing unusual there. It was only after he lined up ready to tackle his own teammate and someone pulled him off the field that he knew something else was up.

That's the thing with concussions – they're invisible – and that's a dangerous handicap in any sport where blunt-force trauma is required to win. To make things worse, the symptoms of a potentially brain-damaging or even fatal concussion are often delayed.

In true Newtonian fashion, from Gonzalez's bonk on the head an idea erupted. For almost three years he and his team built the FitGuard, a U-shaped mouthguard – fits between your teeth like any other – with a few extra features.



Sensors within the FitGuard detect acceleration, which means it knows when your head has been moved by an impact and it can measure the force. It also detects the direction of the blow and any rotation that results. Software then crunches the numbers with personalized and crowd-sourced data to determine the likelihood of a concussion. When it's high, a flashing LED recommends observation. Basically it's a glowing red flag in your mouth.

The red flag also sends, via Bluetooth, the data to a mobile phone, where an app tailors the presentation according to the user, whether it be a Ph.D or a parent.

Gonzalez, who himself studies jiujitsu and Muay Thai, is quick to point out that league sports like football are the targets for now.

"It's not a complete solution" for combat sports due to the rapid-fire nature of the impacts, he acknowledged. For the time being there are training applications. He did say he has been approached about the FitGuard's use in Olympic boxing since the software can be tweaked to count individual blows, thus providing accurate scoring. How it evolves and how smart it can get remains to be seen.

It's all about starting the flow of data, Gonzalez said, in order to overcome a sort of "chicken and egg problem" that exists at the moment. As people use the FitGuard, which Gonzalez hopes to have them doing by spring 2016, the numbers will be uploaded into a database that will become more robust as time goes by. This will, in turn, make the device more accurate. It will also provide data for researchers.

Right now the only results come from the lab but more are on the way. At some point even dead bodies will be knocked around for data; it's a crucial part of testing and they expect to begin soon, said Gonzalez. It's "relatively expensive," though.

There are other questions to confront. What are the liability issues? Who will interpret the data and make a call on it? Will coaches be besieged by helicopter parents?

And then there's the flipside: the people who say such a device would ruin the sports themselves. The ones that have truly surprised Gonzalez are the mothers who say they would flat-out refuse to buy a FitGuard because they just don't want to know the numbers. It's all or nothing for their kids.

Does Gonzalez consider them an obstacle? "No, we just ... consider them not our customers," he laughed. "Safety is more important than winning." RING

MARK KOLBE; RIGHT: ALEX MENENDEZ/GETTY IMAGES

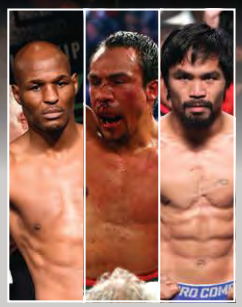
TO BE, OR NOT TO BE

2016 IS SURE TO HAVE ITS SHARE OF DELIGHTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS. HERE ARE 10 THINGS WE'LL SEE AND 10 WE WON'T

By **David Greisman**

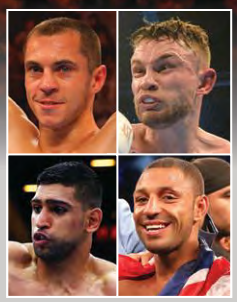
Those of us who love and follow boxing know that the sport can be just like the action within the ring – sometimes fighters see the shots coming a mile away and sometimes they're surprised by something big from out of the blue. This past year brought a huge shock when Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao agreed to face each other. And then Mayweather boxed cautiously to beat Pacquiao, a result anyone picking with his head and not his heart knew would happen. Some of our predictions of what will and won't happen in 2016 are easy and others are bold. Stay tuned for plenty to look forward to and plenty that we hope won't actually come true. »

10 THINGS WE'LL



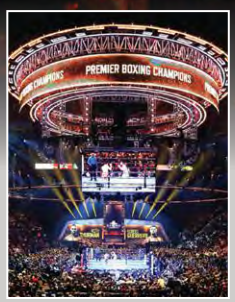
THREE OF THIS ERA'S BEST HANGING THEIR GLOVES UP

The International Boxing Hall of Fame's class of 2022 will be set in stone well ahead of time by the three boxers expected to retire in 2016. Bernard Hopkins didn't fight as a 50-year-old in 2015 but still wants one last bout. Juan Manuel Marquez also was inactive but has been mulling a return before calling it a career. And word is that this April may be the final time we see Manny Pacquiao before he dedicates more time to his political ambitions. (There's no predicting when Roy Jones Jr. and James Toney will finally hang 'em up.)



NOT ONE, BUT TWO MEGAFIGHTS IN THE U.K.

There may never again be 80,000 spectators at a boxing match inside a soccer stadium, as there was for Carl Froch vs. George Groves, but fight fans in the United Kingdom still provide an amazing atmosphere when their stars perform – and they should get to see four of them in two megafights in 2016. The long-anticipated collision between 122-pounders Carl Frampton and Scott Quigg is finally official for late February. Meanwhile, don't be surprised if Amir Khan at last realizes that his best available option is to challenge welterweight titleholder Kell Brook.

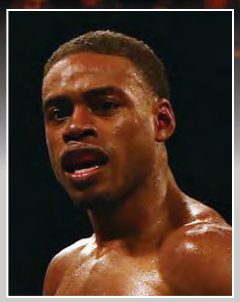


LOTS AND LOTS AND LOTS OF BOXING BEING BROADCAST

Al Haymon's "Premier Boxing Champions" has added a huge amount of fights to the calendar, with shows on an array of networks and with Fox expected to be added in 2016. That means there will be no lack of opportunities for a number of prospects and contenders to have breakout performances, get noticed and open the doors for greater things. All of that is in addition to HBO and Showtime's boxing programming, plus the smaller shows on truTV and the Spanish-language networks. Audiences won't approach what they were in boxing's heyday but those who still like to watch fights will have plenty to see.

JOSHUA AND PARKER BECOMING HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDERS

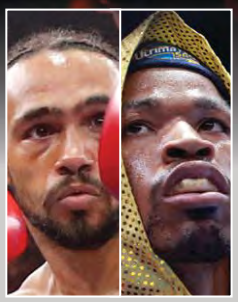
It took Deontay Wilder until he was 28 and more than five years into his career to be considered a heavyweight contender, thanks to his 2014 win over Malik Scott. The wait won't be as long for Anthony Joshua and Joseph Parker. Joshua is 26 and turned pro in late 2013 after winning Olympic gold a year before. The statuesque 6-foot-6 prospect with power has impressed so far. Joseph Parker turns 24 in January and turned pro in 2012. He, too, is blowing through nearly everyone he faces. They will continue on a fast track, becoming contenders in 2016 and working their way toward title shots.



ERROL SPENCE ELEVATING HIMSELF EVEN FURTHER

Spence won't be the first member of the U.S. 2012 Olympic team to challenge for a pro world title. Rau'shee Warren lost a split decision to bantamweight beltholder Juan Carlos Payano this past August. Still, it is Spence who is being tapped to go the farthest. He moved up in the welterweight rankings in 2015 with stoppages of Samuel Vargas, Phil Lo Greco and Chris van Heerden. He was scheduled for one more fight on Nov. 28. In 2016 his foes should include some names you know. They, too, could end up falling to a boxer whose nickname, "The Truth," may turn out to be quite accurate.

SEE IN 2016

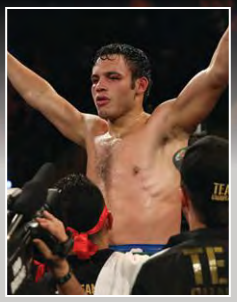


GLORIOUS POWER STRUGGLES AT 147, 154 AND 168

Floyd Mayweather Jr. retired. Manny Pacquiao may soon retire. Andre Ward went to light heavyweight. In the wakes of those moves, there are deep divisions with contenders and titleholders who will want to fill the top spot and reap the benefits that can come with such a position. The shakeout at welterweight may begin in early 2016 with a fight between Keith Thurman and Shawn Porter and hopefully it'll continue throughout the year there, as well as at junior middleweight and super middleweight. Al Haymon has many of the biggest names under his umbrella so it shouldn't be difficult for a number of matches to be made.

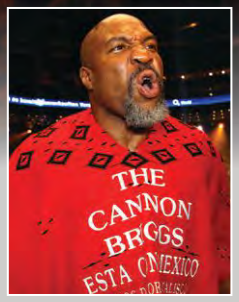
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX BACK IN THE MIX

I wrongly said last year that Rigondeaux would swallow his pride in order to return from exile. It took until November – and Andre Ward suffering an injury that knocked him off the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez undercard – for Rigondeaux to be back in front of an American audience. He appeared on the pay-per-view broadcast against Drian Francisco, taking his first step back from obscurity. He's still the RING champ at 122 but he has been stripped of both of his world titles. He's going to need to convince others to face him and part of that may involve accepting fights on others' terms.



CHAVEZ JR. QUITTING AGAIN, THIS TIME FOR GOOD

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. was never going to be anywhere near as beloved as his father but he hasn't done himself any favors either. He has used his fame to his advantage, including how he kept changing the contract so that he wouldn't have to drop as much weight for his first fight with Brian Vera. Chavez couldn't get by Andrzej Fonfara despite the bout coming at a catchweight; Fonfara beat Chavez up and made him quit. Chavez then came in overweight for his next bout, a win over Marcos Reyes. The desire and discipline just aren't there. He'll soon be beaten again and dispatched for good.



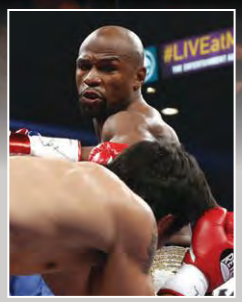
SHANNON BRIGGS' STUNTS ACTUALLY WORKING

Briggs is in on the joke. He knows how silly he looks showing up uninvited at press conferences and in videos that make TMZ and boxing websites, yelling "Let's go champ!" repeatedly and acting unhinged. He knows he hasn't beaten anyone of consequence in eight victories dating back to 2014. But ultimately a name fighter, be it Wladimir Klitschko or Deontay Wilder, will need an opponent for a voluntary defense and he'll be an excusable option, someone with a bit of name recognition who will help sell the fight before being knocked out.

MORE-ENTERTAINING OLYMPIC BOXING

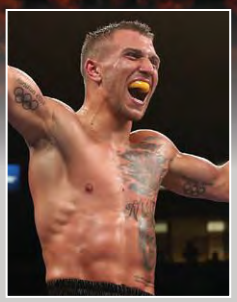
The headgear is gone for the first time in seemingly forever. The complicated scoring system, previously brought in to try to avoid corruption, also is out the window. This could make for far better action, with rounds scored to the fighter who does more damage instead of boxing being scored as if it were a form of fencing. Olympic boxing has lost the prestige it once had in the era of Leonard and Spinks. The Rio Games should be the start of the road back to where it belongs.

10 THINGS WE WON'T



MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO II

Given how much Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao made once they met, it's fair to believe they could pad their bank accounts with a healthy fraction of that record-breaking revenue were they to meet again. That's why few think Mayweather is telling the truth about retirement; a man nicknamed "Money" is leaving a lot on the table by leaving when he's still better than everyone else in the sport. He has earned more than enough, however. He turns 39 in 2016 and no longer wants to put himself through grueling training camps after a lifetime of fighting.



LOMACHENKO AGAINST OTHER TOP FIGHTERS

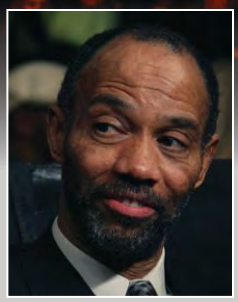
Years ago, the big fight that didn't happen at 126 because of the promotional cold war was Nonito Donaire vs. Abner Mares. Now we must write off the idea of seeing the sublimely skilled Vasyl Lomachenko take on anyone from Al Haymon's stable of fighters, which includes Leo Santa Cruz, Mares, Jesus Cuellar, Lee Selby and Carl Frampton (if he beats Scott Quigg at 122). A rematch with Gary Russell Jr. also is out of the question; they fought before only because Haymon/Golden Boy won a purse bid for a title bout. Meanwhile, the stubborn junior featherweight champion Guillermo Rigondeaux hasn't accepted terms for a Lomachenko bout, while Top Rank stablemate Nicholas Walters can't make featherweight anymore.

THE SMALLEST FIGHTERS RIDING ON CHOCOLATITO'S COATTAILS

It's wonderful that more people are getting a chance to see how great Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez is, first with his easy win over Edgar Sosa on an HBO-televised Gennady Golovkin undercard and then with his impressive stoppage of Brian Viloria on the Golovkin-David Lemieux pay-per-view show. But don't expect promoters and major networks to give similar attention to smaller fighters just because the pound-for-pound king tips the scale at 112. They won't be featured unless they are being fed to Gonzalez. That's a shame. The pound-for-pound list starts with Gonzalez but it does not end there.

CRUISERWEIGHTS GETTING THE LOVE THEY DESERVE

Sure, Krzysztof Glowacki upset Marco Huck and Beibut Shumenov outpointed B.J. Flores on American television in 2015 but the 200-pound weight class still gets surprisingly little attention in this part of the world. Before the division existed, these men would've been heavyweights. Even in recent years most of the best cruisers moved up. Thank goodness for those who remain. Those who do tend to throw with a fun mix of power and volume. The best of the division often are from overseas but that hasn't kept such fighters as Wladimir Klitschko, Carl Froch, Gennady Golovkin, Manny Pacquiao and now Roman Gonzalez from being in the spotlight.



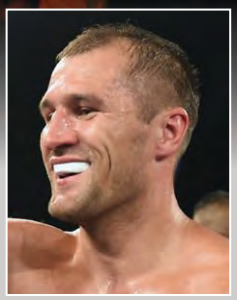
"PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS" MAKING A PROFIT

All of Al Haymon's cards have come at a high cost. He has paid his fighters well when others were footing the bill but now his venture is covering their paychecks just to keep a bunch of boxers busy. These cards rarely sell well at the box office – and the broadcasts, sadly, show that our beloved sport pulls in smaller audiences than television shows which cost but a fraction of the price. PBC either needs higher ratings for higher advertising revenue or it needs to spend less without diminishing the quality of the product.

SEE IN 2016

TOP RANK PUTTING CRAWFORD IN WITH POSTOL

Years ago Top Rank would've been happy to have its fighter beat one promoted by Golden Boy but the result of a fight in October comes with drawbacks. Viktor Postol scored a great knockout of Lucas Matthysse but in doing so diminished the possibility of Matthysse facing one of two other Top Rank fighters, Manny Pacquiao or Terence Crawford. While Crawford vs. Postol would be a unification bout at 140, it wouldn't be the prettiest of pairings even though they are two of the top junior welterweights around. Expect Top Rank to keep them on separate tracks for now.

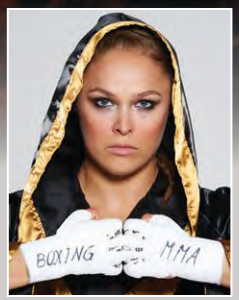


KOVALEV BECOMING AS POPULAR AS GOLOVKIN

Gennady Golovkin has knocked out everyone he's faced at middleweight the past few years and is regularly featured on HBO. Sergey Kovalev achieves pretty much the same results at light heavyweight on the same network. But even though Kovalev has beaten better opponents, it is Golovkin who is a much bigger star. "GGG" sells out arenas on both coasts of the United States while Kovalev is entering into an unnecessary rematch with Jean Pascal because of the tickets Pascal sells in Montreal. Kovalev hasn't been featured for as long but it's difficult to imagine him ever approaching Golovkin's popularity.

GOLDEY BOY COMPLETING THE REBUILDING PROCESS

Golden Boy Promotions still has one of the biggest stars in the world in Canelo Alvarez. But when Al Haymon stopped working with the company, he essentially gutted the company's stable. Golden Boy has since sought to start fresh. It now is facing an uphill battle as it tries to build up prospects and convince free agents to come to a promoter that has less sway in the business than it used to. It hasn't helped that two of its stars have recently been defeated, with David Lemieux losing to Gennady Golovkin and Lucas Matthysse being stopped by Viktor Postol.



RONDA ROUSEY IN A PRO BOXING MATCH

The most famous mixed martial artist in the country has spoken about boxing before. But we shouldn't have expected her daydream to become a reality, even before her brutal loss to Holly Holm in November. Rousey has too much money on the table in the UFC and also has acting gigs when she's not training for fights in the octagon. And the Holm fight showed that Rousey can't handle a boxer who has other skills in an MMA match. She wouldn't be able to take on any boxer worth her salt in a fight contested under The Queensberry Rules either.

ANOTHER $100 PAY-PER-VIEW SHOW

And thank goodness for that.

Sergey Kovalev figures in many potentially intriguing matchups.

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

THE FIGHTS RING CONTRIBUTORS WANT – AND DON'T WANT – TO SEE IN 2016

RON BORGES
Boston Herald

Want to see: Sergey Kovalev vs. Andre Ward
Why: It's time to find out if Ward is still a fighter and Kovalev will make that clear to the world. Ward has fought three times the past four years and only once vs. top-flight competition. He seems to have become someone who'd rather talk about fighting than fight. Kovalev is the opposite.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: Although it would do big business again, it would be a fight between two shadows. I am not yet someone who needs sleep aids to doze off at night. If I did, a rematch between these two guys would do the trick.

GARETH A DAVIES
The (London) Telegraph

Want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Andre Ward
Why: No one has found a chink in Ward's armor. True test for Golovkin. Brilliant matchup. I had thought of Adonis Stevenson vs. Sergey Kovalev initially but this is a better fight. Kovalev breaks Stevenson in my view.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: Because the game is up on this one, really. Mayweather beats Pacman every day of the week. Yet because the rematch is arguably still the richest potential fight in boxing, it could materialize. Then we'll all grumble and groan, and find ourselves covering it again in depth.

BILL DWYRE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Want to see: Wladimir Klitschko vs. Deontay Wilder
Why: Because U.S. boxing fans have forgotten about the heavyweight division and because Klitschko is underappreciated and underrated in our country due to how little exposure he's gotten here. He'd destroy Wilder but at least it would be a heavyweight title fight and, with a U.S. boxer involved, it might get some buzz.
Don't want to see: Brandon Rios vs. anybody
Why: I hope he sticks to his vow to retire because he clearly did exactly that days before his recent fight with Tim Bradley.

BERNARD FERNANDEZ
THE RING

Want to see: Sergey Kovalev vs. Andre Ward
Why: A year ago, my wish list was topped by Kovalev vs. Adonis Stevenson for the unified light heavyweight title. Stevenson, or maybe Al Haymon, doesn't seem interested in such a fight. Maybe Ward, if he is still anywhere near the fighter he was before all the layoffs, is willing to put himself to a big test against Krusher.
Don't want to see: A 46-year-old Roy Jones Jr. vs. anyone
Why: From Russia with gloves? No, thank you. Hey, Roy, you were great. But it's over.

DOUG FISCHER
RingTV.com

Want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Andre Ward
Why: This fight should wait until after Ward faces a Top-10 contender but I'm sick of GGG detractors claiming Golovkin is ducking the American. So bring it on!
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: The first fight was garbage – the most expensive sparring session in sports history – and proof that Pacquiao needs to retire and that Mayweather is incapable of being entertaining. If it's made, I'll go on vacation the week of the fight and totally ignore it.

NORM FRAUENHEIM
THE RING

Want to see: Sergey Kovalev vs. Andre Ward
Why: Without it, legacies go unfulfilled. For Ward, there's urgency. Inactivity erodes his pound-for-pound claim just as Kovalev emerges with one of his own. It's a battle between Ward trying to regain what he had and Kovalev fighting for what he has always wanted.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. anybody
Why: Please, Floyd, stay busy buying Bugatis. Just don't fight again. From Glovegate to IVs,

MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

we've got a bad case of Floyd-fatigue. You could fight Gennady Golovkin. But we know what GGG would do to TBE.

THOMAS GERBASI
THE RING, BoxingScene.com

Want to see: Wladimir Klitschko vs. Deontay Wilder
Why: Watching a recent Holyfield-Tyson documentary reminded me just how fun the heavyweight division used to be, especially in the U.S. Klitschko vs. Wilder would bring that big heavyweight title fight feel back, even if only for one night.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. anybody
Why: Mayweather announced his retirement after the Andre Berto fight and it didn't take long for rumblings about a comeback to begin. Enough. There are plenty of fighters out there now willing to take the fights fans want to see. The Mayweather era is over. Move on.

DAVID GREISMAN
THE RING, BoxingScene.com

Want to see: Terence Crawford vs. Ruslan Provodnikov
Why: Crawford has looked great at both 135 and 140 but hasn't faced the best in either division. Provodnikov isn't the best but his relentlessness would provide a stiff test and show how much pop Crawford has. It might also tell us how strong his chin is.
Don't want to see: Vasyl Lomachenko vs. Guillermo Rigondeaux
Why: As enticing as it might be for a pair of two-time Olympic medalists to face one another as pros, the fact that both are technical wizards could make for an aesthetically displeasing disaster.

BRIAN HARTY
THE RING

Want to see: Vasyl Lomachenko vs. Guillermo Rigondeaux
Why: It could be an odious 12-round stalemate or a counterpunch-a-thon but I'd roll the dice because Lomachenko's tricky aggression looks like the best bet for getting Rigondeaux to engage. If that happens we'll get to see what each of these guys can do.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. anybody
Why: Because "anybody" at this point is synonymous with "us." And we clearly never win.

KEITH IDEC
The (Bergen County, N.J.) Record

Want to see: Kell Brook vs. Amir Khan
Why: This all-England grudge match could draw an enormous crowd to London's Wembley Stadium but Khan has avoided the welterweight showdown, instead chasing more profitable fights against Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. But the unbeaten Brook is an emerging star Khan cannot continue to ignore.
Don't want to see: Wladimir Klitschko vs. Vyacheslav Glazkov
Why: Ukraine's Glazkov is the mandatory challenger for Klitschko's IBF heavyweight title. The uninspiring Glazkov barely beat Steve Cunningham and Derric Rossy and doesn't deserve a title shot.

STEVE KIM
UCNLive.com, BoxingScene.com

Want to see: Adonis Stevenson vs. Sergey Kovalev
Why: It's very simple: Boxing fans are bitterly disappointed that this fight hasn't taken place. It's the most interesting possible matchup at 175 pounds. These are two powerful punchers with contrasting styles. It's hard to see this fight not having fireworks.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: Do I really need to explain? After five years of build-up, the actual fight between the two was an absolute dud and did a lot of damage to boxing. To do this again (and let's face it, it would be about the money and nothing more) would be a slap in the face to the fans.

GORDON MARINO
Wall Street Journal

Want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Andre Ward
Why: GGG seems indomitable but I would love to see him tested against Andre Ward. SOG has superb speed, his movements are unpredictable, he has respectable power and he is a highly accurate power puncher. And the Bay Area fighter is sick of hearing about GGG. So Ward would have mighty motivation for this fight.
Don't want to see: Wilder vs. another second-tier heavyweight
Why: Since winning the WBC title in January, Wilder has been prattling about a title unification fight but both of his title defenses have been against impossibly overmatched opponents.If Deontay wants credibility, he has to take a deep breath and step up the competition.

GARY ANDREW POOLE
Time, Esquire

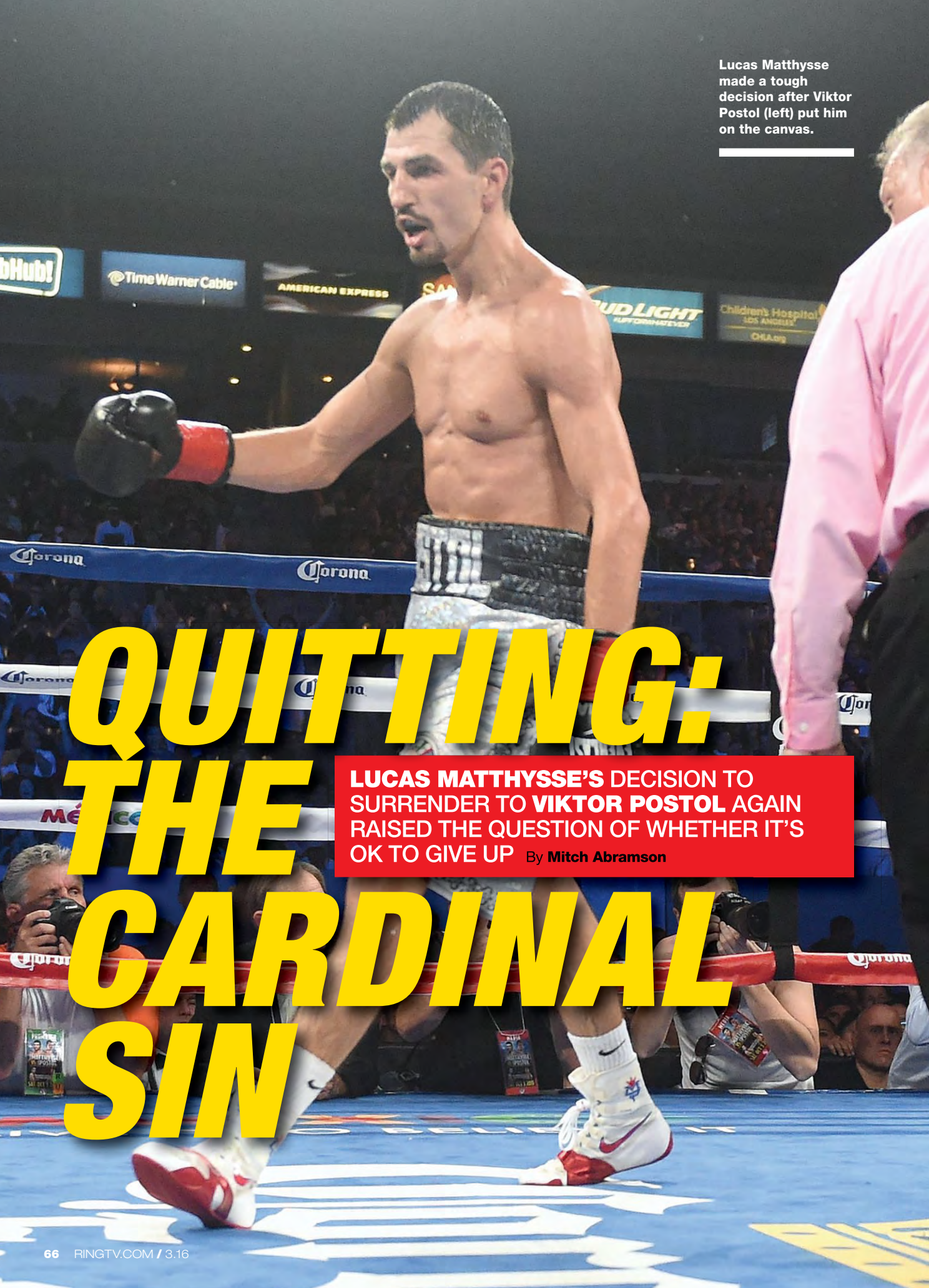
Want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Canelo Alvarez
Why: They are the two biggest stars in the sport, they are at their athletic peak and they have hands of stone. Golovkin understands how to create distance and his 91 percent KO percentage is for the record books. Alvarez (67 percent KOs) also has a hard-punching style.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: Yes, it could happen because of the money involved. Boxing is a slightly more credible place without Mayweather on the scene and Manny has been in a decline for the last few years. Mayweather-Pacquiao I was a dud; Mayweather-Pacquiao II would be no different.

JOSEPH SANTOLIQUITO
THE RING, Sherdog

Want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Canelo Alvarez
Why: I say it's the Hagler-Hearns of our time. You're dealing with two guys who like to put pressure on their opponents and are relentless; it would be a battle of wills. It's the fight fans want and it could happen.
Don't want to see: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao II
Why: Pacquiao wants to avenge his loss but no one wants to see this fight again. Mainstream sports media demanded it, evidently believing it would be competitive. They were wrong. Mayweather-Pacquiao II could work well for one thing – insomnia.

ELLIOTT WORSELL
THE RING

Want to see: Sergey Kovalev vs. Artur Beterbiev
Why: Resigned to the depressing thought that Sergey Kovalev and Adonis Stevenson may never share a ring, we must instead hope for Kovalev vs. fellow Russian destroyer Artur Beterbiev. Beterbiev has won his nine pro fights by KO and might hit even harder than Kovalev, over whom he holds an amateur win. He could be Krusher 2.0. Let's find out.
Don't want to see: Gennady Golovkin vs. Tureano Johnson
Why: Not so much a knock on Johnson, more a knock on the rest of the middleweight division's reluctance to face Golovkin, who should now be beyond uninspiring mandatory title defenses. His unification scrap with David Lemieux masqueraded as a superfight but I want to see GGG get the real thing next year. Canelo Alvarez for starters.



Lucas Matthysse made a tough decision after Viktor Postol (left) put him on the canvas.

QUITTING: THE CARDINAL SIN

LUCAS MATTHYSSE'S DECISION TO SURRENDER TO **VIKTOR POSTOL** AGAIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT'S OK TO GIVE UP By **Mitch Abramson**

Chris Byrd's mouth was agape. Lucas Matthysse was down on one knee, pawing at his left eye and refusing to get up.

Byrd, the former two-time heavyweight titleholder, stared at his television as if he was looking at a UFO. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. "He don't want no more," analyst Roy Jones Jr. said on the HBO telecast from Carson, California, in October.

Byrd had a harsher critique after Matthysse remained on the canvas and was counted out by referee Jack Reiss in a junior welterweight title match against Viktor Postol.

To Byrd, a smallish heavyweight who faced almost every top big man of his era even though he lacked a heavyweight punch, Matthysse had violated the cardinal rule of boxing: He had quit, refused to fight on, waved the white flag in a close, down-to-the-wire fight. »

When Matthysse was knocked down by a right hand in the 10th round, he appeared dazed. He also looked well enough to continue, even if he had taken punishment over the last few rounds and was dealing with an eye injury, as he claimed afterward.

Instead, Matthysse, nicknamed "The Machine," remained on his knee for nearly a minute after it was over, nodding and smiling at the referee as a ringside physician examined his eye.

"I was like, 'Dude, get up and fight!'" Byrd said over the phone from San Diego, a two-hour drive from Carson. "When they called it off, I was like, 'Are you serious?' Everybody at my house who was watching it was like, 'For real?'

"… I don't care (if you tell) the referee that you can't see nothing. I'm going to keep fighting."

Four-time heavyweight champion Hall of Famer Evander Holyfield echoed that sentiment.

"I was brought up never to quit, under any condition," Holyfield told THE RING. "You just didn't do it. … Things are quite different than they used to be. Boxers … they're just not the same."

It's a spectacle that Byrd and Holyfield believe has become all too common of late – a fighter conceding when things get dicey.

And in a sport that glorifies toughness and hails combatants such as Micky Ward and the late Arturo Gatti as near-mythical beings, refusing to soldier on for any reason is akin to wearing a scarlet letter.

But is there ever a time when it's OK to quit? When discretion is the better part of valor? When it's more prudent to fight another day?

Matthysse later told his promoters that he was momentarily blinded by the punch and, in a state of panic, chose not to continue. He felt a pop in his left eye, he said.

Isn't that a reasonable explanation for why he chose not to get up? To many, it's not.

"Why does one go to a boxing match?" asked the New York-based psychologist Dr. Stanley Lieberfreund, a boxing fan himself. "To see aggression and courage. If a boxer doesn't show courage, you're letting down the people from seeing what they want. They don't want to see cowardice. And they're identifying their aggression with the winner. They're living vicariously through the winner. One of the toughest parts of being human is dealing with aggressive feelings constructively. It's one of the dilemmas of being human."

Or as former HBO analyst Larry Merchant put it: "Sometimes the optics matter to fans, where a fighter is on his haunches and looks like he can get up if he wanted to and he doesn't."

And sometimes we might be too quick to judge.

Television analyst and writer Steve Farhood has witnessed in person six ring fatalities in his 37 years in the sport. He was the unofficial scorer for the Oct. 17 bout between Terrel Williams and rising prospect Prichard Colon on NBC.

When Colon began rolling around on the canvas after he had taken a blow to the back of the head in the seventh round, Farhood thought initially that Colon was looking for a way out, that he was faking and "knowingly nodding (to a colleague) that he was trying to quit."

Farhood spoke haltingly, almost

GIVING UP

Four fights in which one combatant was perceived to have thrown in the towel.

ROBERTO DURAN

Opponent: Ray Leonard
Date / Site: Nov. 25, 1980 / New Orleans
Synopsis: Leonard, who had lost to Duran five months earlier, boxed circles around his rival for seven-plus rounds to a point where "Manos de Piedra" felt helpless. He was so frustrated that he decided late in the eighth round that he would no longer play Leonard's fool. There is no evidence that Duran actually said "no mas" but a wave of his fist left no doubt that he quit.

ERIK MORALES

Opponent: Manny Pacquiao
Date / Site: Nov. 18, 2006 / Las Vegas
Synopsis: Morales had faced Pacquiao twice before, winning a decision and losing by a 10th-round KO. Their third meeting wasn't competitive. Fast, hard punches rained down upon Morales and he had no answer. Finally, in the third round, the Mexican ended up on his pants from a straight left. He didn't try to get up, instead shaking his head to indicate he was through.

Erik Morales quit against Manny Pacquiao.

ROBERT GUERRERO

Opponent: Daud Yordan
Date / Site: March 7, 2009 / San Jose, California
Synopsis: Guerrero was asked after an accidental clash of heads caused a cut above his right eye whether he could see. He responded, "No." Wrong answer. The fight was declared a no-contest but Guerrero was the loser in the eyes of fans, who expected him to insist he was OK to continue. Guerrero said he simply answered the ref's question. Was it fair to call him a quitter? You decide.

VICTOR ORTIZ

Opponent: Marcos Maidana
Date / Site: June 27, 2009 / Los Angeles
Synopsis: A wild fight became particularly hairy for Ortiz in the sixth and final round, when he went down under a hail of punishing blows. He got up and seemed to be alert but, his eye swollen and his will exhausted, he decided enough was enough. "I don't think I deserve to be getting beat up like this," Ortiz said immediately afterward. He was labeled by many as a "quitter."

JED JACOBSOHN

reluctantly because of the fight's aftermath: Colon later fell into a coma and suffered bleeding on his brain.

"So for those of us in the know, I think it's very easy to be critical," Farhood said. "But the fact of the matter is, when a fighter quits with let's say a broken nose or an injury, only that person knows the extent of the injury and the extent of his ability to deal with the pain."

The public, though, doesn't necessarily care about the circumstances. And it's not difficult to recall recent cases when fighters clearly conceded a fight because it wasn't going their way.

Erik Morales patiently waited to be counted out in his third fight with Manny Pacquiao in 2006 when he seemed capable of getting up.

Victor Ortiz abruptly ended his war with Marcos Maidana and then infamously said, "I don't think I deserve to be getting beat up like this."

More recently, Willie Monroe Jr., after absorbing a shellacking from knockout artist Gennady Golovkin for six rounds in May, told the referee – again Jack Reiss – that he no longer wanted to continue. "I'm done," Monroe told him.

Luis Collazo refused to come out for the eighth round of his fight against Keith Thurman in July because of a cut above his right eye. "I can't see," he told his corner, forcing them to stop the fight.

Calling the latter match for ESPN, Teddy Atlas was critical of Collazo's actions, suggesting that the veteran had basically quit on his stool even though Atlas admitted that he didn't know the exact nature of the injury.

Atlas reached into the past to make his point. He contrasted Collazo's situation to Muhammad Ali's admission to his trainer Angelo Dundee that he couldn't see after the fourth round of his 1964 bout with Sonny Liston.

Whereas Collazo seemed to be looking for a way out, Ali, with a push from trainer Angelo Dundee, chose to suck it up, Atlas said.

"Angelo Dundee, what did he do? Picked him up and threw him out there!" Atlas said during the July telecast. "If he had given in then, we'd have no Muhammad Ali!"

And fair or not, there's a price to pay if fans perceive a fighter has quit.

Consider the great Roberto Duran, who was relegated to fighting on the undercard of Michael Dokes-Harry Terrell in Cleveland following his epic "No Mas" surrender against Sugar Ray Leonard.

And it took Vitali Klitschko more than three years to repair his image in a competitive bout with Lennox Lewis after he retired because of an injury against Byrd.

Eric Gomez, matchmaker for Golden Boy Promotions, doesn't believe Matthysse should suffer a similar fate.

Gomez, whose company promotes Matthysse, was at ringside when his fighter declined to rise to his feet and was counted out at 2:58 of the 10th round against Postol. He said that Matthysse, following the match, told him he was briefly blinded by the punch. Gomez also said the injury required a medical procedure to remove fluid behind the Argentine's left retina. That's why he believes it's crazy to insist that Matthysse – one of the sport's tough guys – was soft for not beating the referee's count.

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion," Gomez said. "Look, at first many people, when you see a fighter on one knee and they count him out and then he gets up all of a sudden, you can perceive it that way (as quitting). But look into the circumstances and then make your own assessment.

"When he told me that he thought he went blind and he couldn't see for 20, 30 seconds and he said slowly his vision started coming back, to me that was scary."

Gomez said that Matthysse might have to undergo "additional procedures" on his eye.

"So there was a legitimate injury," he said. "Say what you want – and people have every right to describe it every which way they want – but it's pretty scary being in a fight, getting hit and all of a sudden things go black."

Abel Sanchez, Gennady Golovkin's trainer, believes it's the job of the trainer to shield the fighter from being labeled a "quitter" by taking matters into his own hands. If a boxer is hurt or has lost the will to win, it's the trainer's responsibility to stop the fight, he said.

Sanchez says that had he been in Matthysse's corner, he would have stopped the fight with Postol a couple rounds earlier because he noticed that Matthysse had lost his resolve.

"There are moments in the fight where you look at a guy's eyes in the corner and you know that he's finished but you continue to push him out there," Sanchez said. "There has to come a point where a corner says, 'That's it, you've had enough.' They allowed Matthysse to continue even though he was so frustrated, even though he wasn't throwing punches. When he starts going in like this – 'just hit me' – he's looking for someone to help him and nobody was helping him unfortunately."

Merchant thinks that Matthysse should be forgiven because of his history of crowd-pleasing fights, much as Duran and then Morales were.

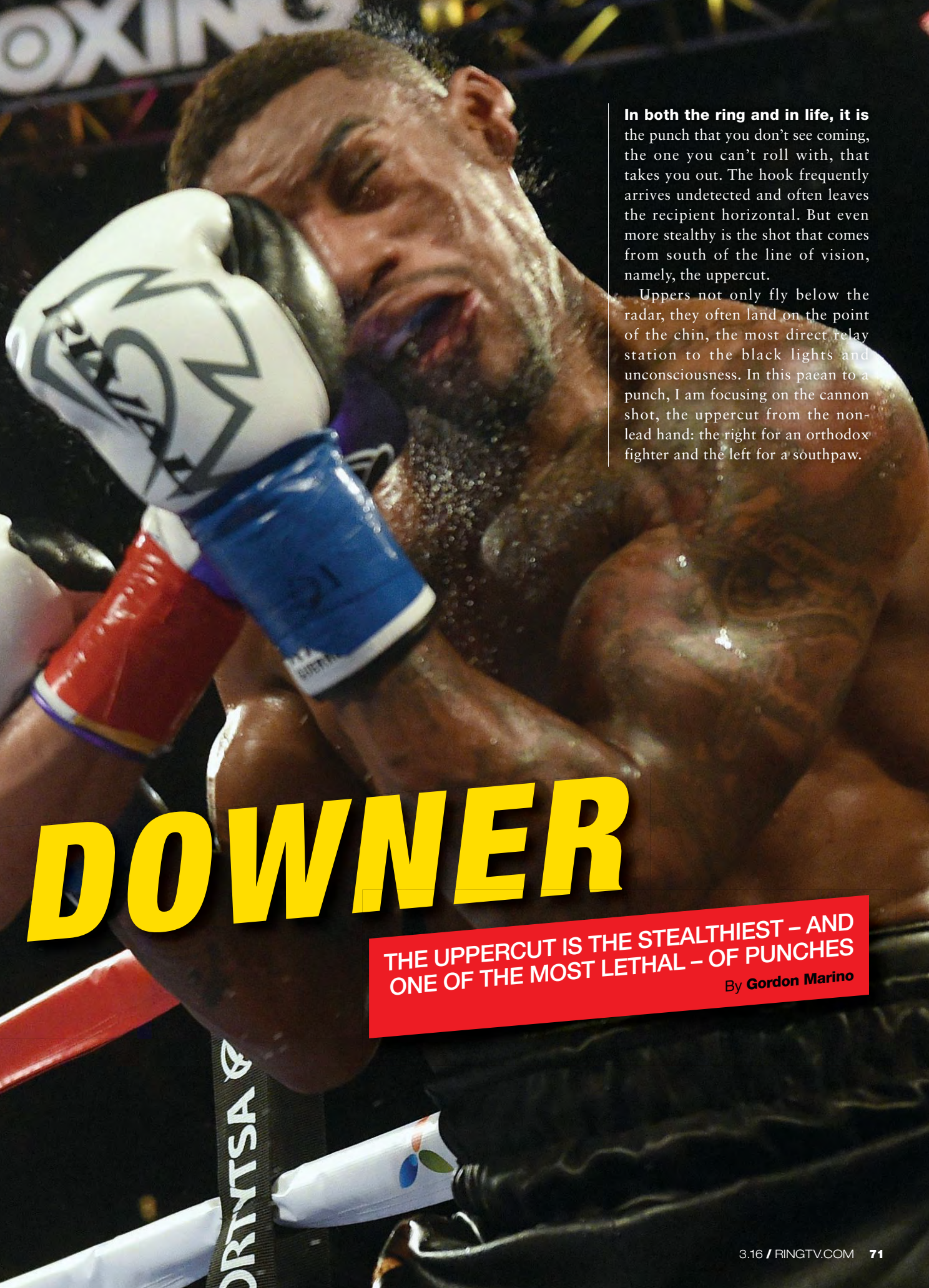
"Matthysse claims he had an eye that was really in trouble, and I have no reason – when you have a warrior like him, who's given us one tough fight after another after another – I don't have to question his motives," he said.

Still, as Farhood pointed out, the sport is unlikely to ever get to a point where fans stop questioning a fighter's heart if he is perceived to have quit. The stigma will remain.

And Farhood doesn't believe that's necessarily a bad thing barring truly significant injuries that prevent a boxers from fighting on.

"One of the things that distinguishes boxing from other sports is the ability to come back from ridiculous odds," Farhood said. "I don't think it would be necessarily a good thing for the fans and the fighters to accept surrender." RING

Gennady Golovkin (left) shows Willie Monroe Jr. how to throw an uppercut.



DOWNER

THE UPPERCUT IS THE STEALTHIEST – AND ONE OF THE MOST LETHAL – OF PUNCHES

By **Gordon Marino**

In both the ring and in life, it is the punch that you don't see coming, the one you can't roll with, that takes you out. The hook frequently arrives undetected and often leaves the recipient horizontal. But even more stealthy is the shot that comes from south of the line of vision, namely, the uppercut.

Uppers not only fly below the radar, they often land on the point of the chin, the most direct relay station to the black lights and unconsciousness. In this paean to a punch, I am focusing on the cannon shot, the uppercut from the non-lead hand: the right for an orthodox fighter and the left for a southpaw.

The uppercut from the power side is poison for an opponent and perhaps has turned the tables in a fight more than any other blow. Take, for example, Joe Louis' magnificent 13th-round knockout of Billy Conn in their first fight, a fight that Louis was losing. Or much more recently, and much less dramatically, take Juan Manuel Marquez's deft use of the uppercut in his destruction of Juan "Baby Bull" Diaz.

Boxing techniques as well as technicians have a history and a lineage. Joe Louis honed his uppercut with Jack Blackburn, who in turn did a careful study of the "Old Master," Joe Gans, who was himself a diligent student of George Dixon.

Boxing historian and Gans biographer Colleen Aycock noted that in the early 1900s, "Uppercuts were fight-ending blows used in in-fighting when in-fighting was an important part of the fight game. Gans' uppercuts were part of combinations usually following short jabs. The uppercut was usually the coup-de-grace of his fights."

Aycock continued, "Gans' 1907 knockout of Kid Herman was considered the best knockout of its day. Footage of this 8-round fight circulated throughout the U.S., even after Gans' death, and was a fan favorite in theaters. If you watch the clips, you can see Gans' frequent use of the uppercut many times, but especially in that 8th round when he corners Herman like a spider trapped in his web – then boom! Herman was out for 5 minutes!"

Flash forward to the present and it is clear that the uppercut has not gone out of fashion. The right jab-left uppercut combination has long been one of Manny Pacquiao's favorite fistic formulas. Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s counter right uppercut was a violent thing of beauty. When he shoulder rolled with an incoming right, Mayweather would either snap back with a straight right or whipsaw the uppercut.

Masters of ring warfare all insist that when you fire an uppercut you want a bend in the knees. You don't want to telegraph the big punch by dropping down before you launch it. Another point of near unanimity is: Don't throw the uppercut from long range.

For all of his 229 victories, Willie Pep had powderpuff power but he scored some of his greatest knockouts with perfectly timed uppercuts. In an interview from the '50s, one of the all-time sweetest of the sweet scientists explained, "The uppercut is a very 'funny' punch. It's a sucker's punch. If you don't time it just right, you're the sucker because you leave yourself open." And you're a sucker if you go bombs away from outside.

Mike Tyson packed a nuclear uppercut which, like Roberto Duran, he liked to bring behind a right hook to the body and punctuate with either (or both) a left hook or left uppercut. However, you live by the sword and die by the sword and it

DO'S AND DON'TS

Three things you should – and shouldn't – do when throwing the uppercut.

DO

1. Fire it from a position with a comfortable bend in the knees.
2. Bring it behind the jab.
3. Follow it with a hook.

DON'T

1. Throw the uppercut from the outside.
2. Telegraph the punch by pulling your arm back before you fire it.
3. Square up when you launch the uppercut.

Jorge Linares (top left) and Terence Crawford (above right) get the upper hand.

NAOKI FUKUDA

was ultimately an uppercut that upended Mike Tyson's career.

In 1990, in perhaps the biggest upset in boxing history, Buster Douglas crushed Iron Mike with a slide to the right and a booming right uppercut. And that was after Tyson had stretched Douglas out with an uppercut of his own in the eighth round! Months later, in his first title defense, the Ohioan broke the cardinal rule and tried to bring the same form of destruction to Evander Holyfield – but from the outside. Douglas missed with his uppercut by the width of a Butterbean and a counter right made him an immediate ex-champ.

Roy Jones Jr. emphasized being in the right place to plant the uppercut but he also noted that once you are there, "You need to dip the back shoulder and drive from the hips" and always up the center.

Shane Mosley said that one of the best uppercuts he ever landed was against Oscar De La Hoya. "The key is to get inside," he said. "Get in position; keep your elbows in and most of your weight on the back foot. Shoot the uppercut on a 90 degree angle and you're bound to hit something."

The uppercut, both right and left, was an important part of Ray Mancini's arsenal. "Boom Boom" believes that his best blow from below may have been one that he lammed into Bobby Chacon. Having noted that bringing the uppercut to the body is a lost art, Mancini recalled, "My dad taught me, only throw the uppercut inside and aim the right upper under the heart. When it lands there it paralyzes guys. And if you miss, maybe you catch the chin or jaw."

The uppercut is a punch that has to be set up or as Bernard Hopkins puts it, "You need to be in position." B-Hop lectured, "You shouldn't really try to set any one punch up. You should always be thinking in terms of combinations. Whatever lands is your punch." But then after recalling a few of his stoppages, Hopkins gleefully added, "But the uppercut is perfect for a Joe Frazier-type fighter – one coming in low and leaning forward."

Speaking of the immortal "Smokin' Joe," in 1971 George Foreman lifted Frazier's crown with an uppercut that propelled Frazier two feet off the canvas. Foreman recalled, "Archie Moore helped me with that fight. When I signed for it, he burst into the gym, certain that he had the plan to beat Joe. It was the uppercut, and during the fight in Jamaica you could hear Archie screaming the whole time, 'Under! Under!'"

Of course, Frazier could also bring hell from below. Richard Slone, who trained under Frazier's tutelage for years, commented, "Joe used to point out that the uppercut is the only punch that landed primarily on the first knuckle."

Slone, now a renowned portrait artist of pugilists, continued, "Joe would like to rip this punch with both hands, with plenty of snap and drive. He would drive it up the middle with almost an explosive lifting position with the weight on the front foot as he preferred. Other times, he'd like to use a short uppercut to set the opponent's head up for his lethal left hook and then also pushed the uppercut into the solar plexus and sometimes doubled to the jaw."

Frazier learned his bruising trade from Yank Durham and later Eddie Futch and George Benton. Futch passed his science of violence on to Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach. Pressed about the uppercut, Roach recited some of the usual but then provided this tweak: "Eddie taught me never to turn my foot on the uppercut. You would think it would give you more power but Eddie believed that when you turn your foot, your feet get out of position and you basically have to throw a left hook to get back in position."

Johnathon Banks, longtime understudy to Emanuel Steward and the trainer of Wladimir Klitschko, said, "Emanuel used to say that the jab and right hand are mandatory but you have to have a feel for the uppercut, you have the rhythm and the timing for it."

Steward was always trying to get his star pupil, "Dr. Steelhammer," to unload the uppercut when he had aggressive, Frazier-type fighters boring in on him. Emanuel once told me, "Wlad is throwing great uppercuts in sparring but he is such a perfectionist and isn't comfortable yet throwing them in a fight."

Banks noted that in terms of technique, "Emanuel used to stress that a taller fighter should only throw the uppercut coming forward. Never backing up!"

Not everyone uses the uppercut as a kill shot. Andre Ward, recalling his recent tussle with Paul Smith, said, "Smith had a very high guard and at least twice I jumped in with my weight on my front foot and landed a left uppercut to his chin. I used it to open him up."

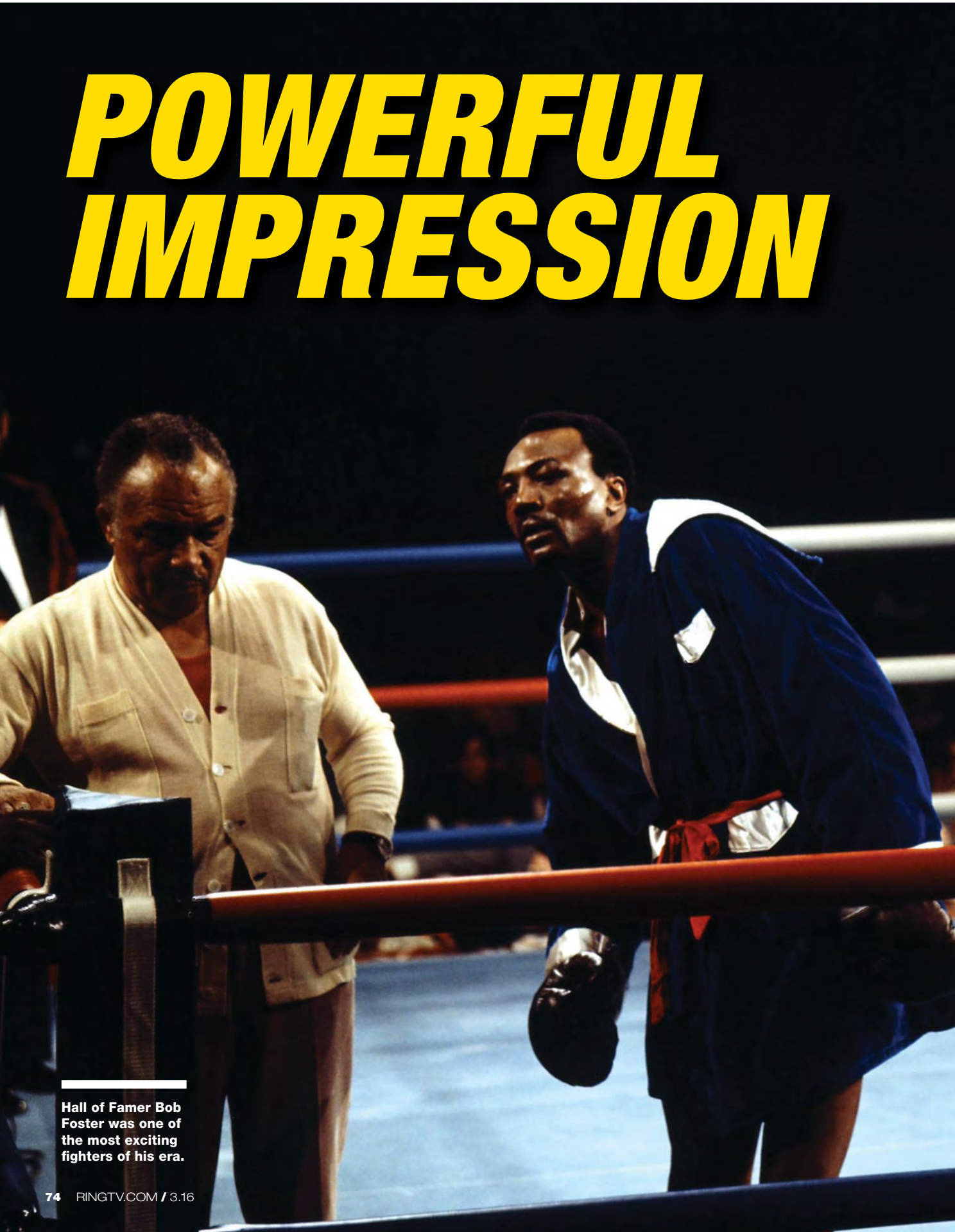
Abel Sanchez, Gennady Golovkin's trainer, said, "Gennady has a couple of different uppercuts but he doesn't use them to knock people out. He uses a left uppercut with his palm facing out to come down the middle with and open a guy up."

(As a footnote, Angelo Dundee said that the first champion he trained, Carmen Basilio, also "threw both his right and left uppercut with the thumb up. Carmen thought it was much quicker that way." Angelo laughed and added, "And I wasn't about to argue with him!")

Sanchez continued: "Gennady uses the right uppercut primarily to set up the body shot; he is not really trying to land it. He just wants to freeze the guy, bring the guy's arms in and then land his best punch, the left hook to the body!" Sanchez pointed out that it was just this right uppercut-left hook combination that put Matthew Macklin away.

All hail the uppercut! A punch that can be used like a can opener or a sledgehammer, a punch that can get you out of trouble or get you into it.

POWERFUL IMPRESSION



Hall of Famer Bob Foster was one of the most exciting fighters of his era.

Editor's note: The great Bob Foster died shortly before our deadline. A more detailed story about the Hall of Famer will appear in the next issue of THE RING.

BOB FOSTER WILL BE REMEMBERED AS ONE OF GREATEST 175-POUNDERS AND BIGGEST PUNCHERS OF ALL TIME By **Lee Groves**

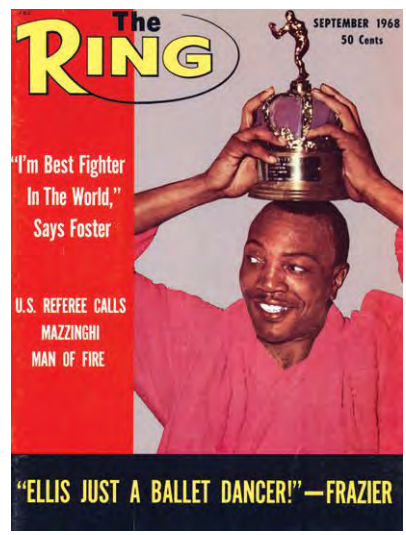
Boxing lost one the greatest light heavyweight champions and biggest punchers ever on Nov. 21.

Former 175-pound champ Bob Foster, whose iron fists ruled the division for more than six years, died in his hometown of Albuquerque at age 77. A cause of death was not immediately given but Foster had been ill for some time.

Foster was born in Borger, Texas, but was most closely associated with Albuquerque. It was where he grew up, where he began his amateur boxing career at age 13 (his record was reportedly 96-4 with 50 knockouts) and where he worked at the police department from 1971 until his retirement in 1994. He amassed a record of 56-8-1 (46 KOs) in his 17-year professional boxing career, which included victories over Henry Hank (twice), Eddie Cotton, Dick Tiger, Roger Rouse (twice), Ray Anderson, Vicente Rondon, Mike Quarry, Chris Finnegan and Pierre Fourie (twice). Foster never lost the title in the ring; he vacated the undisputed championship in September 1974, less than three months after fighting Jorge Ahumada to a controversial draw in Albuquerque.

Standing 6 feet 3 inches and owning a 79-inch reach, Foster's willowy frame generated extraordinary punching power. His left hook was particularly devastating, for it produced two of boxing history's most savage one-punch knockouts – his title-winning fourth-round flattening of Tiger in May 1968 (only Tiger's second loss inside the distance and the sole 10-count KO defeat of the Nigerian's 18-year career) and his fourth-round destruction of the previously unbeaten Mike Quarry in June 1972.

"In the third round I told Mike, 'Mike, that's your last round,'" Foster said in an interview posted by the International Boxing Research Organization's website in March 2012. "Every time I'd throw a left jab he'd slip it by leaning to his right. He'd bring his right hand back up when he returned to his normal position. I faked a jab and turned it into a hook when he came back up. Bam! I hit him right on the point of the jaw. When he went down, I couldn't see his eyes. I thought I'd killed him."



Foster appeared on the September 1968 cover of THE RING.

Two of his other legacy-making knockouts were his second-round dusting of WBA titlist Rondon in an April 1972 unification fight in Miami Beach (the WBA stripped Foster for not defending against Jimmy Dupree, whom Rondon stopped for the vacated belt) and his stirring 14th-round stoppage of Chris Finnegan at Wembley Stadium in London, which was named THE RING's 1972 Fight of the Year.

Foster's fists were only part of his intimidating persona. His speaking voice was a resonant bass and he was more than capable of fixing a fearsome stare. During his frequent visits to the International Boxing Hall of Fame's induction weekend, he and former heavyweight champion Ken Norton could often be spotted at the bar of Graziano's World Famous Inn indulging in their own private game. They would unsettle curious passersby with glares, then, after getting the reaction they were seeking, ease the tension by breaking into wide grins and chatting with them.

For all of his successes at 175, Foster also is known for his struggles when he moved up to heavyweight. He was just 4-5 against men weighing more than 200 pounds but four of the five defeats were against high-quality foes in Ernie Terrell (KO 7), Zora Folley (UD 10), then-heavyweight champion Joe Frazier (KO 2) and Muhammad Ali (KO 8). The losses to Frazier and Ali were particularly memorable; Foster was knocked unconscious by one of Frazier's trademark hooks to the jaw and while he managed to open a rare cut over Ali's eye, "The Greatest" replied by scoring seven knockdowns.

Foster earned several honors: He was voted Fighter of the Year by the Boxing Writers Association of America in 1968 and was among the IBHOF's charter inductees in 1990. He also was inducted into the original RING Magazine Hall of Fame in 1983 and the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1984. He was named in a trio of lists compiled by THE RING; in 1994 he was rated the third greatest light heavyweight of all time while in 1996 the magazine ranked him 23rd among the "Top 50 Fighters of the Last 50 Years." He also was rated the eighth greatest puncher of all time by THE RING in 2003.

While those rankings are subjective, his line-by-line record and the available video footage prove beyond doubt that Foster was a genuine ring immortal. While his physical body is no longer with us, the mark he left on his chosen sport will continue to resonate for all time.

Lee Groves is a boxing writer and historian based in Friendly, W.Va.

George Foreman was fortunate he was the last man standing in his war against Ron Lyle.

BIG GEORGE'S REDEMPTION

THE LEGENDARY BRAWL WITH **RON LYLE** WAS A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN **GEORGE FOREMAN'S** CAREER

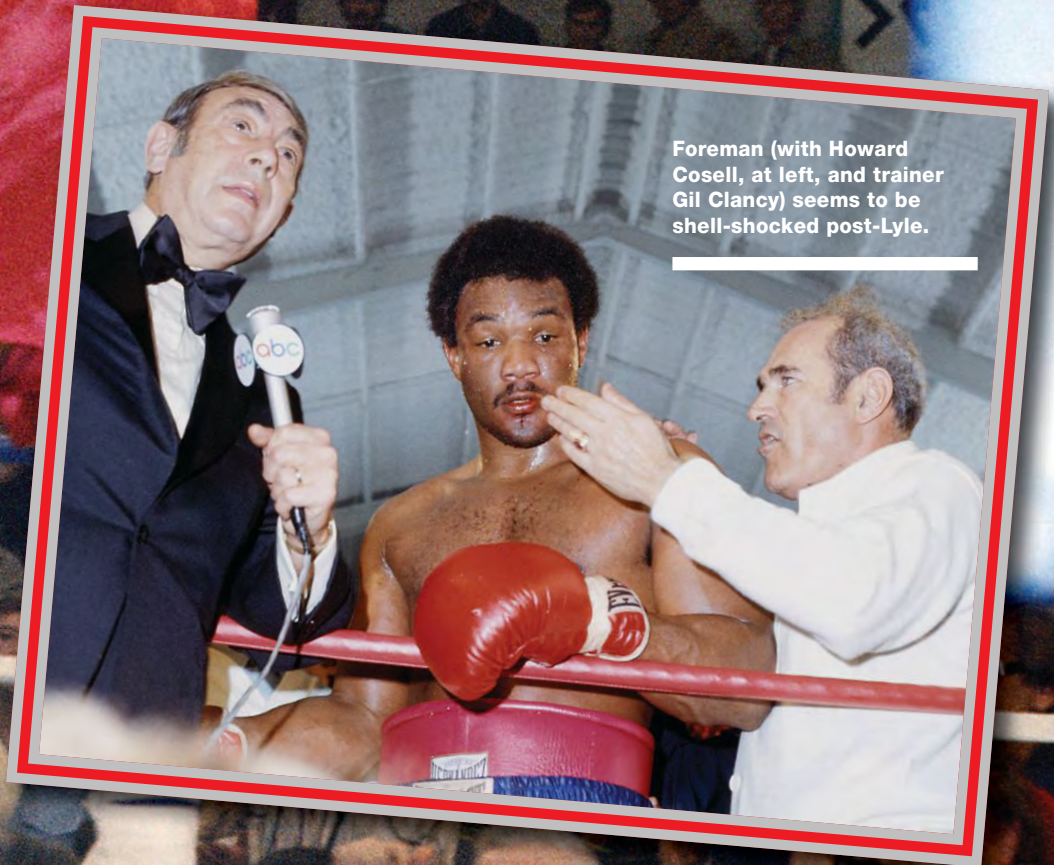
By **Tom Gray**

The third fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier is generally recognized as the most brutal heavyweight war of the glorious '70s but the ultimate punch-up of the era might've been George Foreman vs. Ron Lyle.

When Foreman was knocked out in the eighth round by Ali in the legendary "Rumble in the Jungle" in 1974, he lost more than the heavyweight championship of the world. Big George was stripped of his identity and pride.

The classic slugfest with Ron Lyle took place 15 months later – on Jan. 24, 1976, 40 years ago – at Caesars Palace Sports Pavilion in Las Vegas and became a terrifying rite of passage for the former champion, who went through hell to prevail by a fifth-round knockout over the Denver-based power puncher.

"It's one of the finest moments I ever had in boxing," Foreman said of the bout, the RING Fight of the Year for 1976. "The media had said so many bad things about me (following the Ali fight) and I kept trying to defend myself. What better



Foreman (with Howard Cosell, at left, and trainer Gil Clancy) seems to be shell-shocked post-Lyle.

way to defend yourself than to prevail in a fight like that?

"Rarely do two pure punchers get matched together. Muhammad and Joe (Frazier) was boxer vs. slugger. Muhammad and I was boxer vs. puncher. The closest thing to my fight with Ron Lyle was probably Sonny Liston vs. Cleveland Williams."

Lyle, who died in 2011, was known as an authentic knockout puncher at the time he fought Foreman – he was 31-3-1, with 22 knockouts – but he had an unsavory reputation outside the ring. He had spent 7½ years in a Colorado prison for second-degree murder, during which time he survived a near-fatal stabbing. That notoriety only added to his mystique as a fearless wrecking machine.

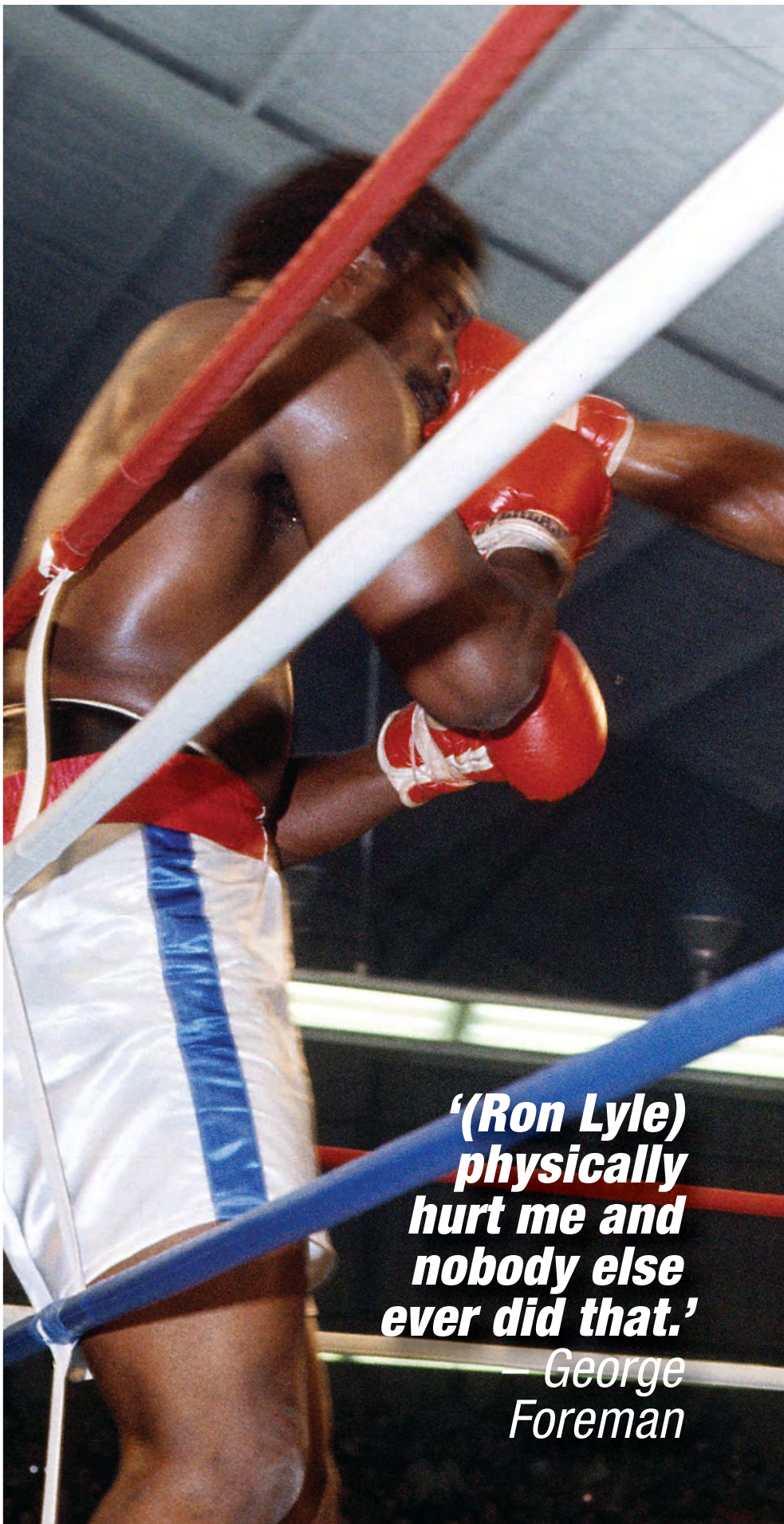
How fearless? Consider this: Following an 11th-round TKO loss to Ali in May 1975, Lyle faced arguably the hardest puncher in boxing history, Earnie Shavers, four months later and emerged with a sixth-round knockout victory. His prize was a meeting with Foreman.

And Foreman certainly remained dangerous in spite of his loss to Ali: He was 40-1, with all but three victories coming by knockout.

"I saw his fight with Muhammad Ali," said Foreman, who was at ringside for that fight in Las Vegas. "Lyle jumped on him in spots but didn't have the ability to overcome Ali's boxing ability. His reputation as a puncher didn't really concern me because, up until then, I'd only struggled with guys who moved.

"I've always said Ali is the only fighter to truly defeat me in the ring because the other guys just survived. They deserved victory for going the distance. Ron Lyle was one guy who refused to run, refused to be intimated, and stood there and had a fight. He physically hurt me and nobody else ever did that."

When the opening bell rang, there was no feeling-out process. Lyle



'(Ron Lyle) physically hurt me and nobody else ever did that.' *— George Foreman*

Lyle (left) ultimately fell victim to Foreman's considerable firepower.

thumped Foreman with a flush right hand to the jaw in Round 1, a shot that had an immediate effect on the huge Texan's legs. Foreman turned the tables by hurting Lyle in the second round, a session that lasted only two minutes because of a timekeeper error.

The third round would be relatively tame but all hell broke loose in an incredible fourth. Another straight right from Lyle set up a vicious cluster of hooks that again robbed Foreman of his equilibrium and this time he went down.

"My God, I was in the fight of my life," said Foreman, who was 27 at the time. "I had to get up and fire back when I was groggy and I'd never been in that position. Lyle would point his right hand in my direction and hit me with it almost every time he let it go.

"It was my first fight with Gil Clancy as trainer and I also had 'Kid' Rapidez, who is rarely mentioned. Rapidez was a former fighter who helped train former welterweight champion Jose Napoles. Both Gil and Kid got me in tremendous condition for Lyle and I needed it."

Fighters are dangerous when hurt and Foreman was no different. Invigorated by his success, the rampaging Lyle went gung ho for the finish and carelessly ran into the heavy fists of his adversary, who sent him crashing to the canvas with a pair of powerful one-twos. Now the roles were reversed; Lyle was wounded and dangerous. Attempting to end the torture, Foreman swung from his heels and was caught with a vicious right-hand counter that dropped him face first at the bell.

Not many rounds, before or since, have been as exciting – or as violent.

Clancy, best known for taking the great Emile Griffith to welterweight and middleweight titles, poured copious amounts of water on Foreman in an effort to revive him and urged his charge to work the body.

Both men were badly hurt at the start of the fifth. However, the second wind that had eluded Foreman against Ali in Africa turned up in Las Vegas. With less than a minute to go in the round, he trapped Lyle in a corner and unloaded a sustained barrage of straight shots and uppercuts to the head. Injured and exhausted, Lyle slowly melted to the canvas for a third time before being counted out by referee Charley Roth.

Despite trials and tribulations and 15 months of inactivity, the former heavyweight champion of the world was back with a vengeance.

"It went beyond inactivity," Foreman said. "I had lost the heavyweight championship of the world and was in a whole new place mentally. My confidence and attitude had been affected so I wasn't just fighting back during the Lyle fight, I was fighting back before I even got in the ring.

"When I look at the fight today, I often ask myself how I got through it and the truth is I don't really know. Lyle hit so hard that he froze me at times and there was no way you could prepare yourself for that kind of punishment in training. No way."

It would be almost 19 years before Foreman would become the oldest heavyweight champion in boxing history by knocking out Michael Moorer in 10 rounds on Nov. 5, 1994, in Las Vegas. That victory is often hailed as a sporting miracle but, from Foreman's perspective, only one fight topped his victory over Lyle.

"Other than my victory over Joe Frazier to win the heavyweight title, my redemption against Ron Lyle means more to me than all of them," he said. "After the Ali loss, I was a shell of myself. I walked around for over a year and could barely face people. I was so low and kept making excuses.

"When Lyle floored me, the first thing through my mind was, 'What excuses do you have now, George? He's knocked you down, you're hurt, and when you get up he's gonna knock you down again.' I said to myself, 'I'm getting up and you'll just have to kill me.'

"I lived through that match and was redeemed."

A REMARKABLE JOURNEY

A NEW DOCUMENTARY CHRONICLES **JOE CALZAGHE'S** UNUSUAL RISE TO GREATNESS

By **Gareth A Davies**

Joe Calzaghe described the movie made of his life as both "humbling" and "enlightening" when we met at the premiere of the film "Mr. Calzaghe" in London's swanky Mayfair district late in November.

The beautifully directed documentary hit cinema screens in the U.K. on Nov. 20. The immovably modest Calzaghe and his extravagant father, Enzo, who trained him throughout his 20-year career, take center stage. It charts a journey that started in a tin shed on the windswept hills of the South Wales Valleys and ended under the bright lights of Madison Square Garden – against Roy Jones Jr. – fighting for a final payday that neither could have ever imagined.

It shows Joe's life from impoverished beginnings in industrial Wales and a childhood of grueling training and horrendous bullying, to Joe and Enzo taking on the vicious world of boxing, beating the best fighters that America could throw at them and getting out with their lives, relationship and fortune intact.

Calzaghe bowed out of boxing seven years ago undefeated after 46 fights, 24 of them championship fights, and as a two-weight world champion.

The rags to riches tale of incredible sporting challenges and triumphs and an emotional study of an unusual father-and-son team will stand the test of time among iconic boxing movies.

"Sometimes it's not until you retire that people appreciate you," Calzaghe told me. "I had a similar experience with my career. I was unappreciated for a long time. I had an awful lot of world title fights to my name before people jumped on the bandwagon after the Jeff Lacy fight.

"I've been retired seven years now and people are starting to respect what I achieved. Every single day I get a message from someone saying stuff like, 'Oh, I just watched your Lacy fight again.' I can't believe it's a decade in March, that fight. I remember it like it was yesterday. Everybody comments on the Lacy

Joe Calzaghe cherishes the fact that his trainer-father, Enzo, was at his side his entire career.

fight and the Mikkel Kessler fight. It's nice to hear that people miss you and wish you would come back."

Calzaghe insists that the movie made him reflect at every turn. "When I see it I'm proud of it and I'm very humbled by it," he said. "I had to think about doing it at first. Everybody knows my record but it was me talking about myself, my boxing. ... The director has put the family aspect across and I'm really proud to see my father on screen and to see the relationship between the two of us play out. It's also got my sons, my grandfather. ... To me, that family aspect is what I'm most proud of."

Calzaghe paid tribute to his father, without whom, he reckoned, he would never have achieved significant success in the ring. "I wouldn't have been able to do it without my dad," he said. "I'd have quit boxing. He's the one who started me in the sport of boxing, he's the one who motivated me when I was a teenager. ... I would have been like every other teenager if it wasn't for him. He kicked me up the arse. Sometimes we'd fall out but that's the way it was. He could see the talent. I'm just so proud we stuck together even when people were against us and said it would never work. We kept the faith."

Enzo, indeed, is a star in the movie. "He had an unbelievable energy," Joe said. "A lot of my talent came naturally. It was obviously honed in the gym. We'd throw 300 punches a round sometimes. But we had this style that people said wouldn't work. They said I couldn't fight that way for 12 rounds. But I did. That's the way I fought. My style is unique. We had our own style.

"It just goes to show it was not a one-man show. It made me appreciate having the love and support of my family. Not just my dad but my granddad, my sisters and my sons. That was the reason I boxed that long – to make sure my boys were financially secure. It's also because of my boys that I retired. It wasn't just the injuries. It was having my boys see their father get put on his arse in his last two fights. They were begging me to retire. I thought to myself, 'I would never forgive myself if I went into that ring and got hurt.'

"Boxing is the most unforgiving sport in the world and I couldn't lie to myself anymore. I lost my appetite in the end and achieved everything I wanted to achieve."

From a personal perspective, it was a privilege to be asked to contribute

TOP 15 (as of Nov 22)

1. AMIR KHAN
2. KELL BROOK
3. LEE SELBY
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. JAMES DEGALE
6. SCOTT QUIGG
7. TYSON FURY
8. JAMIE MCDONNELL
9. MARTIN MURRAY
10. GEORGE GROVES

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Tony Bellew, Callum Smith, Kevin Mitchell, Terry Flanagan.

as a talking head in the Calzaghe documentary. I covered almost his entire professional career. He is a remarkable man and ranks as one of the greatest British boxers of all time.

CARL FROCH

Calzaghe commented on the talk that fellow British super middleweight Carl Froch might return in 2016 when I asked him about it. His advice was straightforward. "Everybody's different," he said. "I can't really speak for him. I don't know him or his mind-set. Most fighters do come back. I'm one of the rare fighters who hasn't come back.

"He's not getting any younger and he won't improve. He'd have to pick his opponent wisely. He struggled in his last few fights and hasn't been that active. Financially, I'm sure he's secure after a couple of big fights but … when a fighter comes back it rarely ends in a fairytale."

Calzaghe also believes that heavyweight Wladimir Klitschko will get his due when he finally walks away from the sport. "I think a similar thing will happen with Klitschko as it did for me," he said. "People might take him for granted now but in years to come they'll realize that being a champion for a decade-plus is a hard feat for anyone in any weight division. When he retires people will put him in the Top 10 or 15 heavyweights of all time. He's got longevity on his side. Maybe because he got knocked out a few times early in his career it's taken a long time for people to respect him as a true champion. But he's proved he's a true champion."

CALLUM SMITH

Callum Smith made history in Liverpool when he floored Rocky Fielding three times in the opening round to be crowned British super middleweight champion, the fourth Smith brother to win a British crown.

Callum, the youngest of four boxing brothers, follows oldest brother Paul, who was also British super middleweight champion; Stephen, who won the British featherweight and junior lightweight titles; and Liam, who won the British junior middleweight belt before going on to win the WBO world title.

Four brothers winning British titles has never been done in the history of British boxing. It may never be done again. Three Walsh brothers – Liam, his twin Ryan and brother Michael – currently fight between featherweight and lightweight and are an exceptional trio but a group of four brothers reaching the pinnacle at the national level deserves huge accolades.

I've written about the agony their mother, Margaret, goes through every time they fight. At least the Smith household is running out of cabinet space for baubles.

"This was a great achievement for the family. It has never been done before. We're very proud of what we have done," Callum Smith, 25, said after winning the title. He remains undefeated with 18 victories and showed real class in defeating Fielding in a raucous Liverpool derby.

Promoter Eddie Hearn reckons Smith is ready to challenge WBC champion Badou Jack but is working through options with his fighter. There has even been talk of a possible fight with three-time world title challenger George Groves first.

Calzaghe was impressed with Smith. "Callum looks supremely confident, which I like," Calzaghe told me. "He's got an air of confidence about him. In boxing you never stop improving. I felt I was a better fighter at 35 than I was at 25. You always improve. He's taking the right steps, he's being looked after well. He just needs to keep working hard."

Smith also caught the eye of Liverpool legend John Conteh, the former WBC light heavyweight champion in the 1970s. "He's got the background, natural ability, a great trainer," Conteh said. "He's got it all there. It's just the mind now where he will be tested. We've had some great fighters from Liverpool recently. But Callum could go to that next level. He has a lot of tools in his bag."

QUIGG VS. FRAMPTON

We have screamed from the rooftops for this one for over a year and the signed fight between Carl Frampton and Scott Quigg, scheduled for Feb. 27 in Manchester, delivers on every level. Styles make fights and Quigg-Frampton has nuance in power, precision, movement and self-belief. It also has two unbeaten fighters, 54 fights between them, just approaching the peak of their powers, eager to assert themselves as the best in the division.

Frampton should also be praised for traveling to Quigg's backyard to face the Englishman. Frampton can draw 20,000 spectators in his hometown of Belfast, Northern Ireland, although many of those fans will travel to Manchester.

The rivals have risen concurrently through the world's junior featherweight rankings, dividing boxing aficionados as to who would prevail when they danced in a ring. Frampton's IBF and Quigg's WBA titles will be up for grabs but this is more about bragging rights. And I understand that each will earn more than $2 million for the contest.

There has been more enmity publicly between the promoters than the fighters but Eddie Hearn and Barry McGuigan are to be applauded for getting through a fog of adversity to create terms for what could be a modern classic.

Frampton says he's "the legitimate champion." Technically, he is. But Quigg has asserted that Feb. 27 will be "the best night of my life." There will be disappointment for one of them. And if it's a barnburner, there could be room for a second. This is a great fight for the sport.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

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BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN By Doug Fischer

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The following excerpts are from the Nov. 23, 2015, edition of the Monday mailbag.

MATT, from the U.K., did not agree with the wide unanimous decision that gave Canelo Alvarez the RING and WBC middleweight championships. Matt scored the bout 115-113 for Miguel Cotto, who he believes controlled the pace with in-and-out movement and made Alvarez miss a lot. Matt, who watched the fight with his friends on British television, wondered how Fischer (who was ringside in Las Vegas) scored it.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I saw a different fight from press row than the one you and your friends watched on TV. Perhaps a replay on TV will look like a closer fight to me but on Saturday night I thought Alvarez was the boss in the ring.

The 25-year-old Mexican won the fight clearly in my opinion. I can see scoring it close if you gave Cotto the benefit of the doubt in every competitive round but I can't envision a draw or points victory for the 35-year-old Puerto Rican. Cotto simply did not commit to his offense enough to win rounds on my scorecard. And when he did land solid shots they had little to no effect on Alvarez. However, Canelo's power punches seemed to freeze and rattle Cotto enough to keep the veteran from planting his feet and trading in every round but Rounds 8 and 12.

Cotto let his hands go more than Alvarez did but he didn't land much. Alvarez avoided most of Cotto's jabs and volleys just by taking half a step back and slipping them with head and upper-body movement. Alvarez didn't let his hands go enough for my taste (I miss the days when elite boxers threw in high volume) but he landed at a higher connect rate than Cotto.

Both fighters seemed stuck in one gear to me. I don't think either ever shifted into a higher gear in an effort to seize control of the fight. Cotto moved around a lot but I didn't view this as "controlling the pace." I thought Alvarez staked out the middle of the ring and waited for Cotto to come around. And when the champ moved into range, Alvarez nailed him with hard, single punches that obviously caught the attention of the judges.

Doug Fischer: Canelo Alvarez was "the boss."

Alvarez is definitely not a pressure fighter. It's just not in his mentality to hunt a mobile boxer down by cutting off the ring. However, he's more elusive than he's given credit for and he's an accurate power puncher.

After 12 brisk rounds, I scored nine rounds to three or 117-111 for Alvarez, as official judge John McKaie, HBO's Harold Lederman and my buddy Steve Kim (who I sat next to on press row) had it. Most of the media members around us scored it 116-112 for Alvarez, which I think is a fair scorecard. I have no problem with eight rounds to four. However, I think 115-113 and 114-114 tallies are bending over backward for Cotto. Anyone who scored it 115-113 for the future Hall of Famer is officially "Team Cotto."

DAVID, of Glasgow, Scotland, was baffled and jaded by the official scorecards of the Cotto-Alvarez fight. "Am I wrong or just because you can't hurt someone doesn't mean you can't pick up points," he said, "Mayweather couldn't hurt Canelo and still outboxed him." David, who thinks Alvarez was lucky to win decisions against Erislandy Lara and Austin Trout, added: "I get the feeling that in order to beat Canelo, you have to knock him out." He also asked Fischer whether Martin Murray, who lost his fourth shot at a world title against Arthur Abraham, has what it takes to ever be a world titleholder.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: Perhaps the fifth time will be the charm for Murray. I honestly don't know if he has the mental disposition to go out and TAKE the title from a world-class fighter. Maybe he's destined to be a mid-to-lower Top 10 contender. There's no shame in that. I've covered a lot of good-to-very good fighters over the years who never won one of the four major sanctioning organization (WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO) world titles – Hector Lopez, Oba Carr, Ivan Robinson, Antonio Diaz, Micky Ward and Angel Manfredy come to mind – but that doesn't mean those guys were not major players within their divisions or that they weren't in significant bouts (a few of them were in Fights of the Year, the others in FOTY candidates).

Regarding your thoughts on the Cotto-Alvarez scorecards, I thought the 119-109 and 118-110 tallies from Dave Moretti and Burt Clements were too wide in favor of Canelo. I was fine with McKaie's 117-111 score. I also thought the red-headed star won nine out of 12 rounds.

VARGAS: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

I have no problem with 116-112 for Alvarez and I'm OK with 115-113 (even though I don't agree with that tally) but I can't fathom a draw or points win for Cotto. HE DIDN'T LAND ENOUGH PUNCHES TO WIN THAT MANY ROUNDS. It's that simple.

Yes, Mayweather did outbox Canelo without hurting him. Do you know why? BECAUSE HE OUTLANDED HIM. Cotto did not do that. Cotto was busier than Mayweather was against Alvarez (throwing 124 more punches, according to CompuBox) but he wasn't nearly as accurate, according to the punch-counters. Cotto landed 21 percent of his total punches against Alvarez. Mayweather landed 46 percent. Cotto landed 14 percent of his jabs. Mayweather landed 42 percent. Cotto landed 29 percent of his power shots. Mayweather landed a whopping 53 percent.

Fischer: Top Japanese boxers stay at home.

So obviously one doesn't have to KO Alvarez to beat him; his opponents simply have to put hands on him more than he does to them (boxing basics, my friend). However, I'm starting to get the feeling that Alvarez won't get credit for a victory unless he scores a knockout. It would be awesome if more of Alvarez's opponents actually tried to knock him out but something tells me the only future foe who's going to do that is Gennady Golovkin. The young man is too damn strong and sharp for most opponents. I think he legitimately beat both Lara (seven rounds to five) and Trout (eight rounds to four). I think it sucks that poor judges in both of the bouts (Levi Martinez, who scored it 117-111 for Canelo against the Cuban, and Stanley Christodoulou, who had it 118-109 for the redhead vs. Trout) tainted two of Alvarez's better victories.

TAKU, from Japan, was thrilled by the nine-round slugfest between Takashi Miura and Francisco Vargas but also disappointed that his countryman lost. He asked Fischer why so many Japanese fighters, with the recent exceptions of Toshiaki Nishioka and Nobuhiro Ishida, have been unsuccessful when fighting in the U.S. and other countries.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I hear what you're saying about the poor recent track record of Japanese fighters outside of Japan but I think you're missing an important factor in your analysis: The best Japanese fighters aren't the ones who leave home. Shinsuke Yamanaka (THE RING's No. 1-rated bantamweight), Naoya Inoue (THE RING's No. 1-rated junior bantamweight) and Takashi Uchiyama (THE RING's No. 1-rated junior lightweight) are the best boxers from your country. I think they would dominate anywhere in the world but they haven't left Japan.

Nishioka is one of the few elite Japanese fighters who traveled. And he won major bouts on the road (vs. Jhonny Gonzalez and Rafael Marquez) before being stopped by a motivated Nonito Donaire.

But most of Japan's elite boxers stay at home because there isn't much of a market for sub-lightweights in the U.S. and they can make more money fighting in your country than they can in Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, South America or South Africa. Most of the Japanese fighters who have traveled to the U.S. have not been champions. They've been tough second- and third-tier sluggers like Nihito Arakawa, Yoshihiro Kamegai and Ishida, who were in with better opponents (but they still gave their foes hell, didn't they?).

NEW FACES

RYO MATSUMOTO

Ryo Matsumoto's promoter believes he already has the ability to win a world title.

HEAVY-HANDED YOUNGSTER HOPES TO EMULATE PAST AND PRESENT 118-POUND JAPANESE GREATS

By **Anson Wainwright**

Japan has a history of successful bantamweights. Fighting Harada, Hozumi Hasegawa and current WBC champion Shinsuke Yamanaka are only three among their country's nine bantamweight world titleholders.

Ryo Matsumoto plans to become No. 10.

Of course, we'll see how that goes. Matsumoto (16-0, 14 knockouts) is only 21 and has had only one fight that was scheduled for more than eight rounds. So far, so good, though: The tall, lanky Yokohama native has six consecutive knockouts, including a fifth-round stoppage of contender Luis May in August.

And that victory was just the second at 118 pounds for Matsumoto, who, at 5 feet 8 inches, could no longer make the junior bantamweight limit.

"It had been becoming difficult to lose weight to (make) 115 pounds," Matsumoto said through translator Tomoyuki Kataoka. "Therefore I went up to bantamweight. At bantamweight I can punch very hard in accordance with my own ability."

After beating May, he took a stay-busy fight in October and was scheduled to fight next in late December before taking aim at a world title fight in 2016 as he tries to emulate his bantamweight predecessors.

That won't necessarily be easy. Harada briefly held a title at flyweight before beating fellow Hall of Famer Eder Jofre to win two versions of the bantamweight title in 1965. He kept the belts for almost three years.

Hasegawa reigned as the WBC titleholder from 2005 to 2010, making 10 successful defenses. And

THE ESSENTIALS
RYO MATSUMOTO

Age: 21

Weight class: Bantamweight

Height: 5 feet 8 inches

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Yokohama, Japan

Record: 16-0 (14 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Tall and rangy ★ impressive power ★ good pedigree ★ from the same gym as other standouts Akira Yaegashi and the Inoue brothers.

Biggest question marks: Still young and growing into the weight ★ largely untested at world level ★ unknown how chin/stamina will hold up as he faces better opposition.

Yamanaka, a current member of THE RING's pound-for-pound list, has been the WBC beltholder for almost four years and has made nine successful defenses, most recently against former WBA titleholder Anselmo Moreno.

Matsumoto seems to have the foundation to join that impressive group. He had an amateur record of 56-3 (39 KOs) before turning pro in his third year of high school.

Since then he has moved up relatively quickly and is ranked by two sanctioning bodies.

"I am convinced that he will be able to become the next star in Japan following … Hasegawa and Yamanaka," said Hideyuki Ohashi, who promotes Matsumoto along with two-time titleholder Akira Yaegashi, contender Satoshi Hosono and the Inoue brothers, Naoya and Takuma. "He is handsome and also of a sunny disposition. He may brighten the atmosphere around him. Therefore, I feel that he will become a big star together with Naoya Inoue.

"He has already enough ability to become a world champion. Of course, as you know, Mr. Yamanaka is the best among all the bantamweight champions and therefore it is still early for him to fight Mr. Yamanaka. However, even now, he would beat any other champion in the bantamweight (division) other than Mr. Yamanaka."

Matsumoto feels the same way.

"In light of my own ability as a professional boxer," he said, "I am convinced that I am not so far from challenging for a world title." RING

3 MORE TO WATCH

DMITRY BIVOL
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
(5-0, 5 KOS)

Bivol doesn't have the strong amateur pedigree of some high-profile prospects but he possesses fight-ending power. All five of the Kyrgyzstan-born puncher's victims have had winning records. And he's already fighting at the 10-round level.

SAUL RODRIGUEZ
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
(19-0-1, 14 KOS)

Rodriguez is a big puncher from Southern California who has continued to thrive against improving opposition. And he is surrounded by some of the best in the business, including trainer Eduardo Garcia and manager Cameron Dunkin.

SHOHEI OMORI
BANTAMWEIGHT
(15-0, 10 KOS)

Omori is highly touted in Japan. The 22-year-old southpaw has stopped former world-title challengers Christian Esquivel and Hirofumi Mukai and was scheduled to face Marlon Tapales in a WBO title eliminator in December.

Tyrieshia Douglas is confident that she will become a star in boxing.

MOVING FORWARD

TYRIESHIA DOUGLAS HAS LEFT HER TRYING CHILDHOOD IN THE PAST AS SHE PURSUES A BRIGHT FUTURE

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Boxing is often a haven for those who were born with few advantages in life other than their fists and the determination to use them to escape their surroundings. The sport has saved the lives of many people.

Tyrieshia Douglas is one of the latest. "Boxing changed my life completely," said the 26-year-old from Washington, D.C.

Douglas' childhood was difficult. Her mother and father were in and out of jail as a result of drug use, which forced Douglas and her siblings to spend most of their formative years shuttling from foster homes to relatives' homes and back again. At 16, the future world champion was arrested for her role in a fight with three attackers.

She and her younger brother, current middleweight prospect Antoine Douglas, subsequently discovered boxing and things changed dramatically.

The two went on to the 2012 Olympic Trials and while they fell

short of making the U.S. team – Tyrieshia losing a close decision to eventual bronze medalist Marlen Esparza – they captivated reporters with their story and both are now chasing glory as professionals, refusing to use their past as a crutch.

"That was never on my mind," she said. "Yeah, I was going through some things here and there but my past actually made me the woman that I am today. I don't like when people say, 'Oh, my mom was on drugs, I got molested, I did this, I did that, and that's why I'm a junkie or that's why I'm this way or that way.' You chose to go in that direction. I'm going to go forward and I'm not going to let nothing hold me down.

"I don't see how other people just give up. You're just making it worse when you can strive to be better. Me settling for less, that was never on my mind. I always go forward."

To some, those are just words. To Douglas, they comprise a blueprint for success.

She works as a personal trainer and boxing coach because of limited opportunities in women's boxing but, because of her determination, she is nonetheless one of the top pros in the world. She has won one flyweight and two bantamweight world titles in just 11 fights.

In 2015, she accomplished an almost impossible feat: She stayed busy, managing to find three opponents when it's difficult for other top fighters to find one. She had a fourth bout scheduled for Dec. 12. When asked what her secret is, she laughed.

"There's really no secret," she said. "I'll just fight whoever. I go wherever the fight is."

Her lone professional setback came this past July 31, when she lost a unanimous but disputed decision in a flyweight bout to unbeaten Leonela Paola Yudica in Yudica's backyard of San Juan, Argentina.

Douglas was disappointed but hasn't allowed it to derail her plans to change the face of women's boxing.

"It was a hometown favorite thing because she didn't want to fight at all," she said. "I was upset but I got over it as soon as it happened."

Douglas was back in the ring as soon as someone could be found to fight her. That someone was Nydia Feliciano, who "Lady Tiga" decisioned over 10 rounds on Nov. 12 to retain her UBF bantamweight crown.

She believes 2016 will be the year a wider audience gets to watch her and her peers do their thing.

"I am very positive," she said. "And once I get my spot, it's say no more. I'm very confident of my skill. Laila Ali, she was cool and she did what she was supposed to do, but Tyrieshia 'Lady Tiga' Douglas? The first time they ever give me a fight on ShoBox or Showtime, it's gonna be a wrap. It will be, 'Laila Ali who?' I'm the real deal when it comes to boxing."

Yes, Douglas fully expects a happy ending to her harrowing story. And she is bringing her parents along for the ride, although not in a conventional sense.

"The feeling when I put on gloves is so unexplainable," Douglas said. "I always wanted my mother and father to be there and when I have my gloves on, it's like I have my mother and father in my left hand and my right hand. You know how it is when you're a kid and your parents never got to see you do anything? When I put on those gloves and let my hands go, it's like they're seeing everything." RING

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 35-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight

3. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 32-4-3 (14 KOs)
Junior featherweight

4. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 35-10-1 (19 KOS)
Featherweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 24-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight

6. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 22-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 24-5 (9 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. ALICIA ASHLEY
U.S. • 23-10-1 (4 KOS)
Junior featherweight

10. EDITH SOLEDAD MATTHYSSE
ARGENTINA • 14-7-1 (1 KO)
Featherweight

Through fights of Nov. 22, 2015

LATE REPORT **Editor's note:** *The Wladimir Klitschko-Tyson Fury fight took place as we were preparing to go to press. The result is not reflected in THE RING Ratings.*

Tyson Fury (right) kept Wladimir Klitschko at a safe distance the entire fight.

A STRANGE NIGHT

TYSON FURY BECOMES HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP BY TAKING DOWN AN ODDLY INACTIVE WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Stunning. Historic. Surrealistic. All three adjectives aptly describe the fight between Wladimir Klitschko and Tyson Fury on Nov. 28 in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Klitschko had been one of the most dominating heavyweights in the history of the division, whether winning by wide, noncompetitive decisions or brutal knockouts. No one, it seemed, could touch him.

Against Fury, he barely threw a punch. And you can't win a fight without throwing punches. Even if you're Wladimir Klitschko.

Fury didn't do much either, other than fight with energy and with some elusiveness while landing a few harmless punches along the way. That was enough, though. We all wondered afterward whether the Briton would get screwed by the judges in Klitschko's adopted country but no one was surprised when the cards were read: 115-112, 116-111 and 115-112, all for the new RING, IBF, WBA and WBO champion.

"This is a dream come true," said Fury, who quickly became emotional as he was interviewed in the ring. "We worked so hard for this. I put everything in the gym for this. I can't believe I've done it."

Neither can anyone else. Tyson Fury? Heavyweight champion? That's hard to comprehend.

So are the punch statistics in a truly miserable fight that would've been unwatchable if it weren't for its bizarre nature and significance. Consider the CompuBox numbers:

Klitschko threw only 231 total punches, 19 per round. He landed 52, 4.3 per round. It gets worse. The former heavyweight king landed only 18 power punches the entire fight, 1.5 – yes, 1.5! – per round. In other words, he didn't show up.

Fury's numbers: 86 of 371 total punches, 48 of 202 power punches. That's how little it took to knock off the best heavyweight of the era.

"I couldn't find the right distance to land those shots," Klitschko said in a soft voice at the post-fight press conference. And, "Tyson was quick with his hands and body movement and his head movement. I couldn't land the right punches."

All that might've played a role in Klitschko's personal debacle. There is also the obvious assumption: Age had caught up to him.

Klitschko is 39. He was bound to get old, which sometimes happens in a single fight. Maybe it happened against the 27-year-old Fury, whose youth certainly was a factor in putting an end to his opponent's remarkable run atop the division.

Klitschko stopped Chris Byrd in 2006 to win the IBF title and begin a second run as champion. He successfully defended 18 times, collecting other belts along the way. Some began to attach to him the word "great" as he built a sturdy aura of invincibility.

That's what made the fight against Fury so astonishing. He went from unbeatable to pathetic overnight, although in retrospect perhaps we saw unfamiliar vulnerability in a competitive decision over Bryant Jennings in April.

Fury deserves credit for his victory – one of the biggest upsets in recent years – but it had at least as much to do with the loser as the winner.

Is Klitschko finished? Evidently not. His team was adamant that they would exercise the rematch clause in the contract for the first fight.

Will things go better for Klitschko? They couldn't go much worse.

LARS BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

RINGSIDE REPORTS

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BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Roman Gonzalez (left) demonstrated against Brian Viloria why he's the top fighter in the world.

ROMAN GONZALEZ TKO 9 BRIAN VILORIA

Date: Oct. 17
Site: Madison Square Garden, New York City
Division: Flyweight
Weights: Gonzalez 111.4 pounds, Viloria 111.4
RING ratings (before fight): Gonzalez C, Viloria No. 3
Network: HBO Pay-Per-View

The pound-for-pound debate, a tired exercise for several years, is suddenly meaningful again. It took a little guy to restore its relevancy. Perhaps that's appropriate. At their best, flyweights are a snapshot – a small yet thorough synopsis of skill, speed, power and smarts.

All four and more were there in Roman Gonzalez's debut as THE RING's pound-for-pound leader as he surprised Brian Viloria early, stunned him later and finished him in the ninth round.

"I had prepared for a different Roman," Viloria told ringside media.

For all that it mattered, the tough and capable Filpino-American could have been preparing for Julius Caesar. Viloria (36-5, 22 KOs) never had a chance against a 28-year-old Gonzalez (44-0, 38 knockouts), whose reign looks as if it could last for a very long time.

Within his 5-foot-3, 112-pound frame, Gonzalez moves on agile feet and adjusts from boxer to puncher, from finesse to power, with deceptive ease. And he does it all with the kind of speed Viloria didn't anticipate.

That speed appeared like a lightning strike in the third round in the form of a right hand that dropped Viloria, who turned 35 on Nov. 24, for the first time in his long career. It was sneaky. Short and chopping, too. Above all, Viloria never saw it. It was the opening salvo in what was to follow: a singular display of Gonzalez's versatile skill set.

From uppercuts to body shots to multi-punch combos and all from a variety of angles, it was a convincing argument as to why Gonzalez is the pound-for-pound No. 1. It also ended with media and fans wondering if they had just witnessed a beginning.

"I'm not sure what the plans are after this fight," said Gonzalez, the RING and WBC champ who is rumored to be in line for a February bout with Thailand's Amnat Ruenroeng, the IBF titleholder, before an anticipated rematch with Mexican Juan Francisco Estrada.

Whoever is next, there was an appetite for more after referee Benjy Esteves ended the punishment at 2:53 of the ninth. That's the idea, of course. That's why HBO signed the quiet Nicaraguan, who reminds many of his boyhood hero and mentor, Alexis Arguello. That's why K2 joined Teiken in a co-promotion that paired Gonzalez with middleweight Gennady Golovkin in GGG's first pay-per-view bout, a stoppage of the overmatched David Lemieux.

The reported PPV number – 150,000 customers – didn't blow anybody away. But it, too, was a beginning. It was the first in a new TV market for GGG and Gonzalez, fresh new faces at the top of the pound-for-pound crowd. They are on the leading edge of an emerging generation vying to prove itself to fans exasperated by Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao. At one level, the business is starting over with Gonzalez, a Roman who wasn't built in a day.

NO. 5 LEE SELBY UD 12 FERNANDO MONTIEL

Oct. 14, Glendale, Ariz. (ESPN)

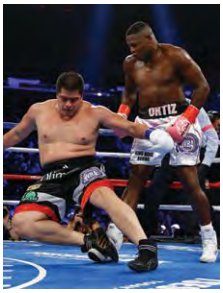
Welsh featherweight Lee Selby said hello to America with both hands.

A long jab and a precise counter enabled Selby (22-1, 8 KOs) to make a solid first impression, a defense of his IBF featherweight title with a unanimous decision over tough and tested Fernando Montiel (54-5-2, 39 KOs) on a PBC card.

Selby got what he needed but he knew it was only the beginning of a campaign to heighten his profile in the U.S. market. At the end of the road, he hopes for a shot at Leo Santa Cruz, the best and the brightest on Al Haymon's 126-pound roster.

He already knows that if he gets that fight, "solid" isn't enough.

"If I boxed as well as I did a few months ago, I could beat Santa Cruz," Selby said after winning a 119-109, 118-110, 116-112 decision. "I wouldn't if I box like I did here."



LUIS ORTIZ KO 3 MATIAS VIDONDO

Oct. 17, New York (HBO PPV)

Luis Ortiz has a lot of power. Lots of confidence, too.

The power is in plain sight. It was oh-so-evident against Argentina's Matias Vidondo, who got in the way of it during the first three rounds of a heavyweight bout at Madison Square Garden.

Ortiz (23-0, 20 KOs) knocked him down twice. There would have been a third and fourth but it never got that far. Vidondo (20-2-1, 18 KOs) was floored, crashing face-first onto the canvas, by a right hook in Round 2. He went down again from a straight left early in the third. At 17 seconds of the round, it was over.

The confidence? "I am ready for (Wladimir) Klitschko," Ortiz said. "I know he is running from me."

We'll see. First, Ortiz was set to test his power and confidence against Bryant Jennings on Dec 19.

NO. 2 TERENCE CRAWFORD TKO 10 DIERRY JEAN

Oct. 24, Omaha, Neb. (HBO)

Terence Crawford left Manny Pacquiao with a very tough choice.

Who does Pacquiao end his career against in April?

A. Crawford, an emerging young lion he doesn't know.

B. Tim Bradley, an aging lion he knows and has beaten.

C. Amir Khan, a former stablemate and an ex-champion always stalking bigger prey yet often left at the altar.

Crawford (27-0, 19 KOs) ensured he was on the short list with a convincing stoppage of Dierry Jean (29-2, 20 KOs) but he also might have convinced Pacquiao that B and C were safer options.

"Make it happen," Crawford said to his promoter Bob Arum after knocking Jean down three times in a junior welterweight bout stopped at 2:30 of the 10th round. "I'm ready."

No doubt. No immediate word either from Pacquiao, who was still deliberating after Bradley's November victory over Brandon Rios.

NO. 1 ALEXANDER POVETKIN TKO 12 MARIUSZ WACH

Nov. 4, Kazan, Russia (BoxNation)

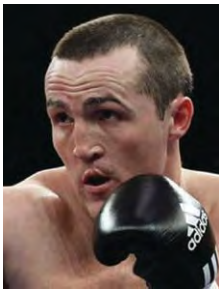
With Alexander Povetkin's mandatory shot at Deontay Wilder's heavyweight title on hold, Povetkin did the next best thing: He fought a guy one inch taller than the 6-foot-7 Wilder.

Was it Povetkin's way of saying he is getting ready for Wilder? Maybe. Still, it was hard to judge Povetkin's 12th-round stoppage of Mariusz Wach (31-2, 17 KOs). At 6-foot-8, Wach is big, all right. But big isn't necessarily good. Wach was as slow and awkward as he was imposing.

Povetkin (30-1, 22 KOs) capitalized, alternating his attack between body blows and head shots until the bout was stopped in the early seconds of the 12th because of nasty cuts sustained by Wach, one across the bridge of his nose and the other below his left eye.

When asked about Wilder, Povetkin said, in so many words: Next question.

"I just don't think about it," he said.



NO. 2 DENIS LEBEDEV TKO 8 LATEEF KAYODE

Nov. 4, Kazan, Russia (BoxNation)

Denis Lebedev turned his friendship with Lateef Kayode into a rivalry. Good for Lebedev. For his old pal, however, it just meant a bad beating.

"I'm enjoying the win," Lebedev said. "Today, November 4, we said to each other we're not friends."

Turns out they weren't equals either. Despite coming into the ring unbeaten and with evident power, Kayode never had a chance against Lebedev (28-2, 21 KOs), who retained his version of the cruiserweight title with an eighth-round TKO.

Lebedev, who in 2011 knocked out Roy Jones Jr. in a scary stoppage, treated Kayode (21-1, 16 KOs) like a sworn enemy, battering him for most of the first six rounds, knocking him down once in the seventh and twice in the eighth, first with a body shot and then a left hook. Referee Steve Smoger finally – mercifully – stopped it at 1:22 of the eighth.

NO. 4 TIM BRADLEY TKO 9 BRANDON RIOS

Nov. 7, Las Vegas (HBO)

The fighter-trainer relationship is an uncertain collection of several elements. There's ego and business. In the end, however, it's judged like anything else. Win and it works. Lose and it fails.

Tim Bradley-Teddy Atlas works.

Atlas shouted like a fire chief and Bradley (33-1-1, 13 KOs) fought like he was battling a four-alarm blaze, scoring a ninth-round stoppage of Brandon Rios (33-3-1, 24 KOs). Afterward, an extinguished Rios announced he would retire.

Bradley promised a whole new animal. Against Rios, he didn't have to be. The old Bradley – the guy who beat Juan Manuel Marquez and stopped Joel Casamayor – was more than enough against a shopworn Rios, who gained about 23 pounds after struggling to make 147.

Bradley and Atlas agreed to work together for at least one more fight, perhaps against Manny Pacquiao, in a bigger test of their newfound union.

NO. 4 GILBERTO RAMIREZ UD 10 GEVORG KHATCHIKIAN

Nov. 20, Las Vegas (truTV)

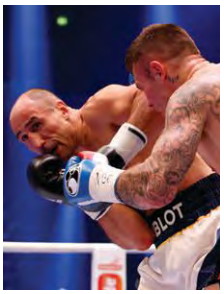
It was a mandatory performance. That's another way of saying Gilberto Ramirez did what he had to.

Ramirez (33-0, 24 KOs) punched his way to a 100-90, 99-91, 100-90 decision over Gevorg Khatchikian (23-2, 11 KOs) to earn a shot at the WBO super middleweight title held by Arthur Abraham.

Ramirez won but the bout lacked fireworks. The real drama happened in the aftermath. Tim Bradley, a ringside analyst for truTV, was doing his post-fight analysis when Jessie Vargas approached him and called him out. Vargas has long wanted a rematch with Bradley after suffering what he feels was an unjust defeat. They had to be separated.

Back in the ring, Ramirez offered his own analysis of the fight against Khatchikian.

"I tried to knock him out," Ramirez said. "But he was more elusive than we saw on the tapes."



NO. 1 ARTHUR ABRAHAM SD 12 MARTIN MURRAY

Nov. 21, Hannover, Germany (Sky Sports)

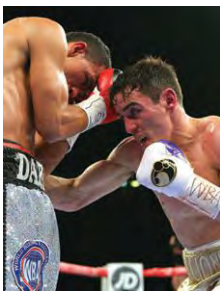
Martin Murray's pursuit of a world title has taken him up the scale and across the globe yet that belt remains elusive.

He left Mannheim, Germany, empty-handed four years ago after a draw with middleweight champion Felix Sturm. He tried and failed to take Sergio Martinez's belts two years after that. This time he went to Hannover, seven pounds heavier and in pursuit of Arthur Abraham's WBO super middleweight title, but left the same way: frustrated and still searching.

Abraham (44-4, 29 KOs) proved to be as tough and clever as ever. At 35, he knows how to win. Murray (32-3-1, 15 KOs), penalized for holding in the 11th round, complained about the scores – 116-111, 115-112 for Abraham and 115-112 for him.

If the fight had been anywhere else, he said, "I would have got the decision."

For Murray, another chance in a rematch seems unlikely. Abraham appears to be headed for a mandatory defense against Mexican Gilberto Ramirez.



NO. 10 ANTHONY CROLLA KO 5 DARLEYS PEREZ

Nov. 21, Manchester, U.K. (Sky Sports)

Anthony Crolla has more than a title to celebrate. He has his life.

The WBA lightweight belt that Crolla took from Colombian Darleys Perez is the emblem, the trophy, that marks his amazing comeback from getting hit over the head with a concrete slab while trying to apprehend burglars in his Manchester neighborhood last December.

Crolla suffered a fractured skull. For a while, it looked as if he'd only be fighting for his life. A year later, however, Crolla (30-4-3, 12 KOs) was back in the ring, scoring a fifth-round KO of Perez (32-2-1, 20 KOs) in a rematch.

How does he feel about his attackers? "I've forgiven them," he told U.K. media after knocking out Perez with a body shot at 2:30 of the round.

Why?

"You can't hold onto grudges," he said while holding on to a belt won by an undisputed survivor.

NO. 5 FRANCISCO VARGAS TKO 9 NO. 2 TAKASHI MIURA

Nov. 21, Las Vegas (HBO PPV)

Francisco Vargas and Takashi Miura fought after the Boxing Writers Association of America began taking Fight of the Year nominations.

By the time their classic ended, the ballot had a new contender that could make voters forget about any other in 2015.

Vargas and Miura staged a junior lightweight battle worthy of the prize – and a rematch. Vargas overcame a knockdown and a battered right eye for a ninth-round TKO of Miura.

Miura (29-3-2, 22 KOs), staggered in the first, was in control. He floored Vargas (23-0-1, 17 KOs) with a left late in the fourth. In the eighth, Vargas looked beaten. But looks deceive.

Vargas opened the ninth with a combination that dropped Miura, who quickly got up but appeared unsteady. Vargas followed with a violent succession of blows, prompting a stoppage at 1:31 of a round to remember.

SELBY: CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES; ORTIZ: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; BRADLEY: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; ABRAHAM: MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES; CROLLA: DAVE THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

DECEMBER

DEC. 29 – Naoya Inoue vs. Warlito Parrenas, junior bantamweights (for Inoue's WBO title), Tokyo. Also, Javier Mendoza vs. Akira Yaegashi, junior flyweights (for Mendoza's IBF title); Takuma Inoue vs. Rene Dacquel, junior bantamweights; Satoshi Hosono vs. Akifumi Shimoda, featherweights.

DEC. 31 – Kazuto Ioka vs. Juan Carlos Reveco, flyweights, Osaka, Japan.

DEC. 31 – Kosei Tanaka vs. Vic Saludar, strawweights (for Tanaka's WBO title), Nagoya, Japan.

DEC. 31 – Takashi Uchiyama vs. Oliver Flores, junior lightweights (for Uchiyama's WBA title), Tokyo. Also, Ryoichi Taguchi vs. Luis De La Rosa, junior flyweights (for Taguchi"s WBA title).

JANUARY

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. JEAN PASCAL

Date: Jan. 30
Location: Bell Centre, Montreal
Division: Light heavyweights (for Kovalev's IBF, WBA and WBO titles)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Significance: Kovalev (28-0-1, 25 KOs) stopped Pascal (30-3-1, 17 KOs) in eight rounds in an entertaining fight at the Bell Centre last March. The Russian was too good and too strong for the game Canadian then. There's no reason to believe anything will change in the rematch.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Kovalev KO 5; Fischer – Kovalev KO 7; Harty – Kovalev KO 11

JAN. 16 – Deontay Wilder vs. TBA, heavyweights (for Wilder's WBC title), Brooklyn, N.Y.

JAN. 16 – David Haye vs. Mark de Mori, heavyweights, London

JAN. 23 – Joseph Parker vs. Jason Bergman, heavyweights, Apia, Samoa.

FEBRUARY

SCOTT QUIGG VS. CARL FRAMPTON

Date: Feb. 27
Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England
Division: Junior featherweights (for Quigg's WBA and Frampton's IBF titles)
TV: Sky
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Significance: The biggest U.K. fight since Froch-Groves II pits two prime, unbeaten 122-pounders against one another. Frampton (21-0, 14 KOs) survived two knockdowns to top Alejandro Gonzalez in July. Quigg (31-0-2, 23 KOs) has cruised since a draw in 2013.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Frampton UD; Fischer – Quigg UD; Harty – Quigg SD

Carl Frampton (second from left, with manager Barry McGuigan) vs. Scott Quigg (with promoter Eddie Hearn) is the next superfight in the United Kingdom.

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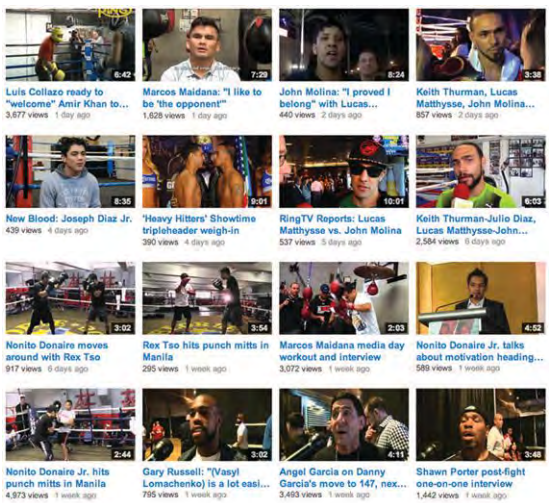

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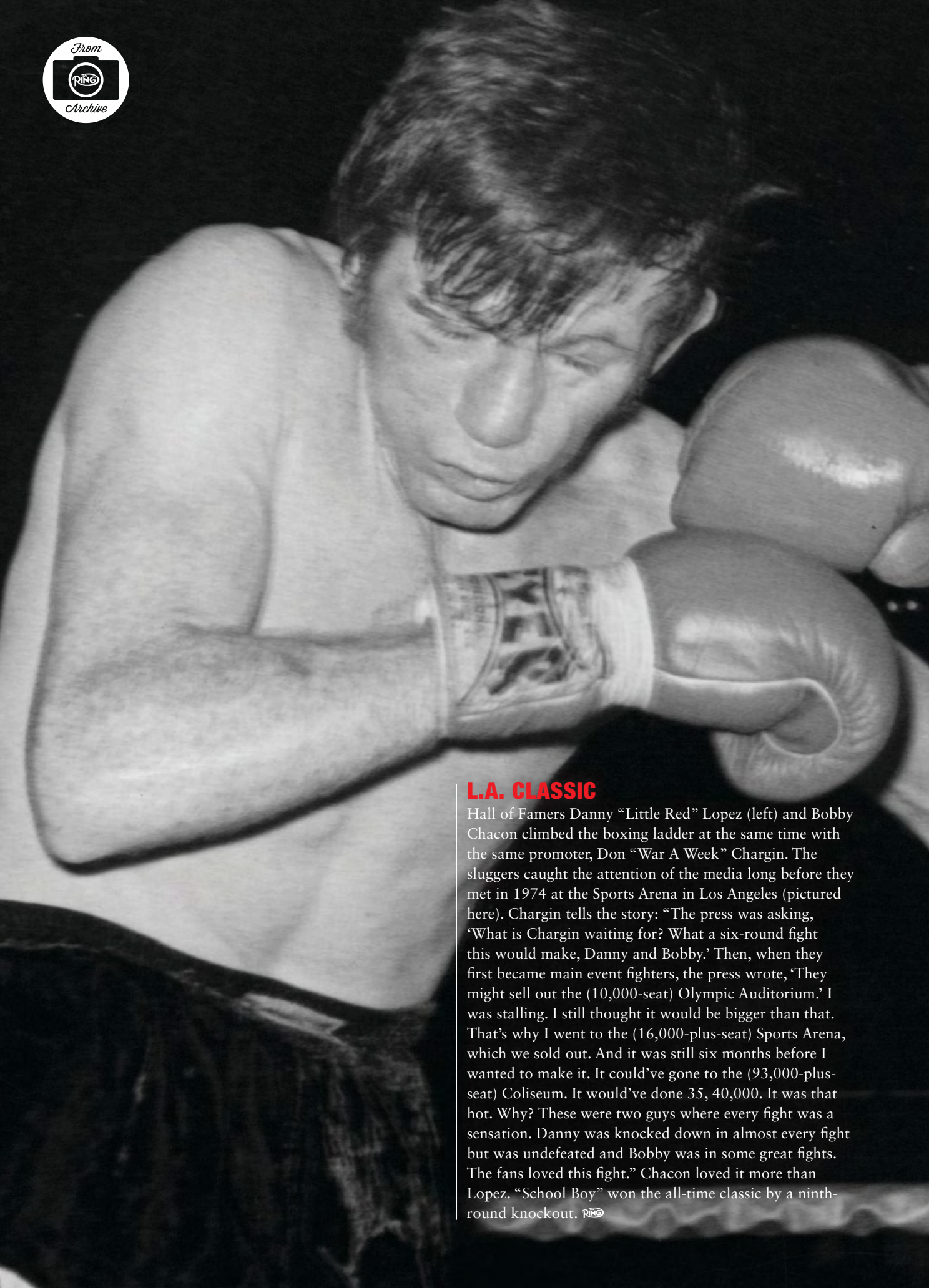
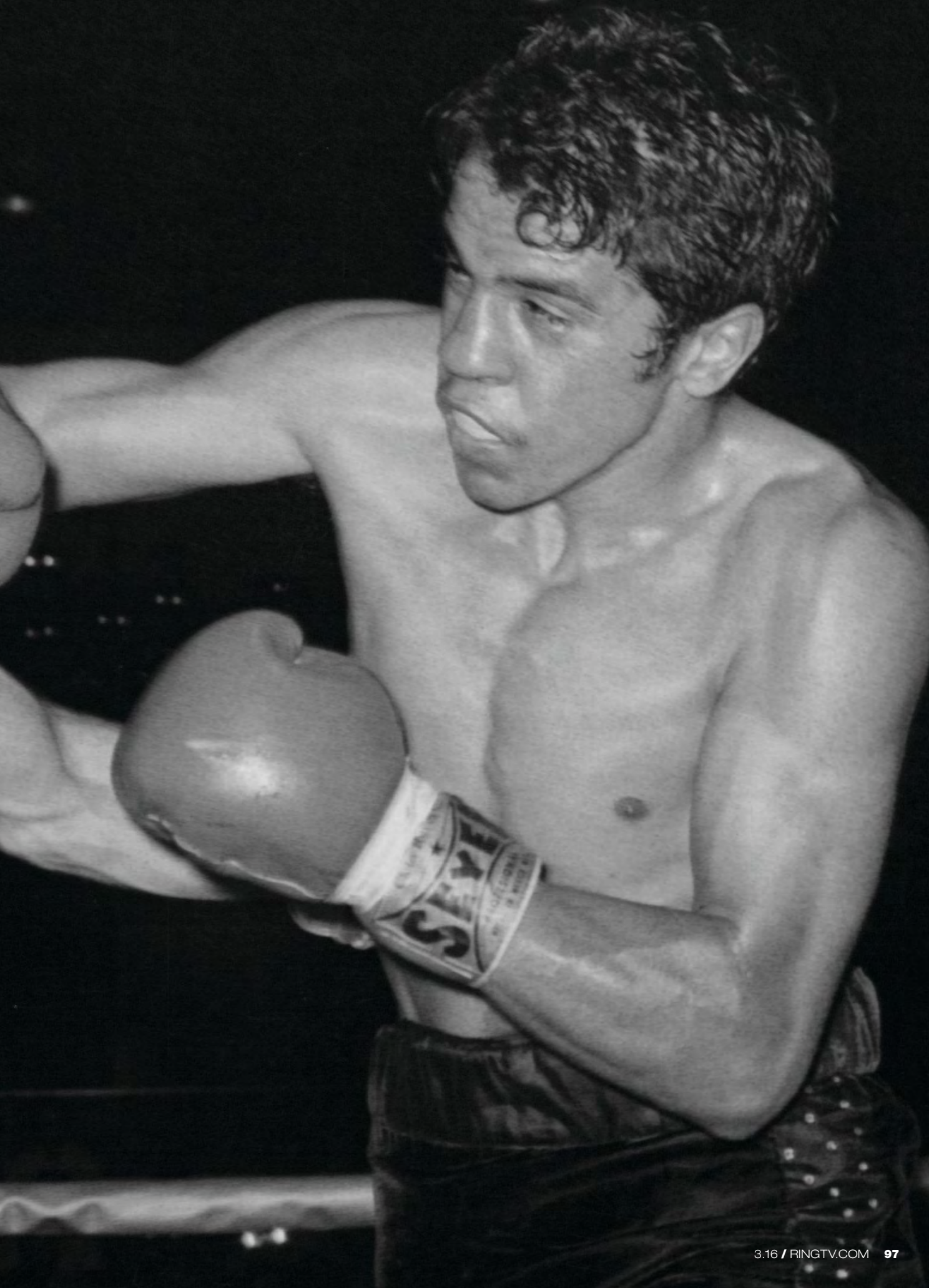


L.A. CLASSIC

Hall of Famers Danny "Little Red" Lopez (left) and Bobby Chacon climbed the boxing ladder at the same time with the same promoter, Don "War A Week" Chargin. The sluggers caught the attention of the media long before they met in 1974 at the Sports Arena in Los Angeles (pictured here). Chargin tells the story: "The press was asking, 'What is Chargin waiting for? What a six-round fight this would make, Danny and Bobby.' Then, when they first became main event fighters, the press wrote, 'They might sell out the (10,000-seat) Olympic Auditorium.' I was stalling. I still thought it would be bigger than that. That's why I went to the (16,000-plus-seat) Sports Arena, which we sold out. And it was still six months before I wanted to make it. It could've gone to the (93,000-plus-seat) Coliseum. It would've done 35, 40,000. It was that hot. Why? These were two guys where every fight was a sensation. Danny was knocked down in almost every fight but was undefeated and Bobby was in some great fights. The fans loved this fight." Chacon loved it more than Lopez. "School Boy" won the all-time classic by a ninth-round knockout.



FILM REVIEW

'CREED' CONNECTS

THE SEVENTH INSTALLMENT OF THE 'ROCKY' SAGA IS AMONG THE BEST

By **Andreas Hale**

The world has changed a great deal since Rocky Balboa ran up the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps back in 1976. "Rocky" is a pop culture artifact that lives in fragments in today's society. From the Bill Conti theme song to numerous lines from the film to its memorable characters, it remains the pound-for-pound king of boxing cinema.

It may not have needed a seventh incarnation but this one works very well. Director Ryan Coogler's take on the franchise rivals the four-decade-old original. "Creed" follows Adonis Johnson (portrayed brilliantly by Michael B. Jordan), the estranged out-of-wedlock son of Rocky's rival-turned-friend, Apollo Creed. Rescued from a childhood heading nowhere fast by Apollo's widow, Mary Anne Creed (Mrs. Huxtable herself, Phylicia Rashad), Adonis blindly wades into the career of the father he never knew in a subconscious quest to figure out where he came from. All roads lead to Rocky (reprised by Sylvester Stallone) and the strangers form a bond that yields some truly touching moments.

What makes "Creed" tick is Coogler and Aaron Covington's screenplay, which completely eschews the run-of-the-mill boxing narrative. Adonis isn't fighting his way out of poverty; he's simply unable to escape the gift and curse that his father left him. It's less a fight for survival than it is a means of discovery.

Under Coogler's direction, "Creed" has an emotional edge that measures up to the original film's gripping underdog tale. It's fresh enough to stand on its own but has enough references to the original material that true fans will remain engaged.

The chemistry between Jordan's Adonis and Stallone's Rocky is authentic and heartfelt. They are kindred spirits seeking remnants of the late Apollo Creed in each other's movements, which creates a cautious but deeply emotional connection between them. To his credit, Stallone exudes more vulnerability in this film than he has in the past few decades. Less action star and more sage, Stallone delivers one of his finest performances as a former world champion who is sucked back into the very world that his ravaged body left behind. He feels indebted to his fallen friend and struggles with the decision to let the new generation of "Creed" into the sport that eventually betrayed him.

As for the boxing scenes, which include cameos from Andre Ward and Gabriel Rosado, they are choreographed extremely well. Rather than feature the Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots who only blocked punches with their faces, "Creed" is more nuanced in its approach to the sweet science. Of course there's still a Hollywood air to the bouts, but it never comes off as campy.

"Creed" preserves the Rocky legacy while offering something new to this generation of moviegoers who may not comprehend the cinematic significance of the original. More importantly, the film reminds us why Rocky will always have a place in our hearts.

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